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Saint Thomas Sunday Christ IS Risen! Indeed He IS Risen!

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yuriy, Anastasia [Metropolitan Yuriy's mom], Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynec, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Pani Mary Ann Chubenko, Father Jim Orr, Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—young man with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller,

Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Stroz [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Howard Simpson, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pyrch, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Trachine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Stella McKeag, Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemmerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaugenhaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam & Gordon Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, Barry [Father Jim Orr's cousin], Tim Joyce, Mike Pawlyshyn-Jeannie Stutchell's brother, Joe Samchuck—vocations, Albert Heckman, Brianna Stumpf, Stanley Porembka, David & Terry Coyne Hartnett, Mike C., Jennifer Scheirer [Nick Behun's daughter], Catherine Beecham [Father Bob's cousin], JoAnne & Dave Andrews, Rev. Peg Bowman, Pat Jennings, Tim Sams, Mike Ruzzi, Cindy M., Stephen Popichak—Fr. Bob's brother, Mary Kay Ludovicy, Pastor Sara Irwin, George

Dilendorf, Andy Torick, Carol Behun, Erv Frye, William Lusherand, Bill Boretsky, Colin Kirton—Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, Clifford, Joe Veto, Paul Riley, Tonee & Sydnee Turner, Annette Paluh, Cathy Lotinsky, Monk Andrew, Jeff & Buschra Kerr, Steven—Harry Batch's cousin, Rose Mary Pavlovich—Mary Anne Kuznik's Cousin, and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline and Walter Sakol. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ...Christ IS Risen! Indeed He IS Risen! At this time, we are unable to celebrate Pascha together in our parish church, but we TRIED but are unable to live-stream any services due to poor internet connection via cell phone. That said, there is **NOTHING to keep us from praying...for each other, for our family and friends, and most of all for the first responders—EMTs, nurses, doctors, firefighters, police officers, and members of our military who keep us safe. Be well, and be **SAFE!!!** God Bless!**

Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please ask Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY, APRIL 26 NO SERVICE IN SLICKVILLE 10:30 AM
ANTIPASCHA—SECOND SUNDAY OF PASCHA; SAINT THOMAS SUNDAY;
HIEROMARTYR ARTEMON-PRESBYTER OF LAODICEA IN SYRIA; MARTYR
CRESCENS OF MYRA IN LYCIA; MARTYR THOMAS OF ALEXANDRIA

Tone 1

Acts 5:12-20

John 20:19-31

Litany in Blessed Memory of Gary Drapcho—Reader Alexander [coworker]

SUNDAY, MAY 03

NO SERVICE IN SLICKVILLE

10:30 AM

**THIRD SUNDAY OF PASCHA; SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN;
RIGHTEOUS JOSEPH OF ARAMATHEA & NICODEMUS; SAINT THEODORE
TRICHINAS-HERMIT NEAR CONSTANTINOPLE; SAINTS GREGORY &
ANASTASIOS-PATRIARCHS OF ANTIOCH; SAINT ANASTASIOS-ABBOT OF SINAI;
CHILD-MARTYR GABRIEL OF BILOSTOK**

Tone 2

Acts 6:1-7

Mark 15:43-16:8

***Litany in Blessed Memory of Charles Cherepko, Joseph Baloga, Daniel J. Pysh,
Jr., Nicholas Homyrda, Anna Metrick, Carol Rose, Bogdan Mural, Esther
Tylavsky, Evdokia Josephine Repa, +Metropolitan Constantine, Metro Warholak,
Khorja Joanne Abdalah, Katherine Tomson, Walter Golofski, Jr., Michael
Yarmeak, Anna Vangrin, & Stella Cherepko--Fr. Bob***

SUNDAY, MAY 10

NO SERVICE IN SLICKVILLE???

10:30 AM

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA; SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC; RIGHTEOUS
TABITHA; TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF MARYTR ABRAMIUS OF BULGARIA;
HOLY APOSTLE AND HIEROMARTYR SYMEON THE KINSMAN OF THE LORD;
SAINT EULOGIUS THE HOSPITABLE; VENERABLE STEPHEN-ABBOT OF
PERCHEVSKY LAVRA & BISHOP OF VOLODYMR IN VOLYNA**

Tone 3

Acts 9:32-42

John 5:1-15

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 26 APRIL 2020

**ANTIPASCHA—SECOND SUNDAY OF PASCHA; SAINT THOMAS SUNDAY;
HIEROMARTYR ARTEMON-PRESBYTER OF LAODICEA IN SYRIA; MARTYR
CRESCENS OF MYRA IN LYCIA; MARTYR THOMAS OF ALEXANDRIA**

*****PAGE 203 IN THE BLACK DIVINE LITURGY BOOKS*****



PASCHAL LETTER of the Permanent Conference of Ukrainian Orthodox Bishops Beyond the Borders of Ukraine

God-Loving Pastors, Honorable Monastics, and all Faithful Children of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Beyond the Borders of and in Ukraine:

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

"And now go quickly, tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead and He is going ahead of you to Galilee, there you will see Him." (Mt.28:7&10)

It is with these words of joy through the lips of an angel that God announces the Resurrection of His Only Begotten Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, the women who had come to see His Tomb. The entire Orthodox world today celebrates the Feast of Feasts, the new Passover of Salvation, and thus joyfully glorifies the Source of Life-the One Risen from the Tomb, Christ our Lord.

The first words Christ spoke to the Apostles after his Resurrection were "Peace be with you." Let us look deeper into the meaning of these words of the Savior. He speaks here of peace and tranquility in our souls and hearts, which we can only achieve through genuine, genial love, harmony, understanding, and mutual forgiveness.

"The Great and Sacred Feast has arrived-the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ: the foundation of peace, the initiation of reconciliation, the cessation of hostilities, the destruction of death, the victory over Satan. Today, mankind has united with angels and, we are one body together with celestials singing Paschal hymns. Today, Satan's power is destroyed, the bonds of death are vanquished, hell is astonished because it is shattered". (St. John Chrysostom, Epistle for Easter).

Therefore, rejoicing, we will thank the Savior for His great and incredible Mercy to us, always glorifying His Third Day Resurrection. "The angel cried to the Lady Full of Grace: Rejoice, Pure Virgin. Again I say, Rejoice! Your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb. With Himself, He has raised up all the dead. Rejoice, all peoples." (Easter Canon)

In these holy days of Pascha—the Resurrection—we greet one another with the words "Christ is Risen." These words unite heaven and earth, creation with the Creator, mankind with God. The Resurrection of Christ strengthened the faith of the apostles and through them, the faith of all Christians in the world.

The present threat of the Coronavirus pandemic have shocked the world. Every day we hear about the numbers people infected and the mounting death toll. All this makes us think about our personal lives and our behavior. During this difficult period, when we think about this unprecedented crisis, let us remain at peace and most importantly, be in fervent daily prayer. May our faith be strong and firm. We pray and hope that the Lord, through His glorious Resurrection, will set us free from this pandemic and all our suffering and worry.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, dear Ukrainian people in the beyond her borders and in Ukraine! We wholeheartedly greet you all on the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ, and we pray that the Risen Lord will bestow upon all of you His gracious strength to do good works, to increase generous love, to bring peace to your families, friends and neighbors. We pray for peace throughout the whole world, especially in the East of our native Ukraine and all the other war-torn areas of our world. Let us remember that true joy and peace will be in our hearts only when we sow goodness among ourselves. Our Heavenly Father will forgive us our transgressions only if we sincerely forgive the transgressions of others.

Through the Resurrection our Lord opens the doors for us to eternal life—that precious treasure that "neither moth nor rust destroys" (Mt 6:20), because He "destroyed Death by death and to those in the tombs He bestows life." Therefore, let us not pass by and ignore this occasion for eternal life, but let us give our hand to one another and say, "Brethren, even by those who hate us let us forgive all for the sake of His Resurrection."

St. Gregory the Theologian says: *"The day of the Resurrection is a joyful beginning. Enlighten ourselves with this celebration and let us hug one another. Let us say "brethren" to those who hate us, and, even more so, to those who love us, or have done or suffered anything because of us. In the spirit of the Resurrection, we are forgiving one another...Yesterday I was crucified with Christ, today I am glorified with Him. Yesterday I was dying with Him, today I have come to life."*

In celebrating the Passover of Christ, we ask the Risen Savior to help us all see with His Glory with pure hearts, *"Glory as the only begotten of the Father"* (Jn 1:14).

May the Grace of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ from His Radiant Tomb be with you all!

With the Archpastoral blessings,

+ YURIJ - Metropolitan Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

+ ANTONY - Metropolitan Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, South America and Diaspora

+ JEREMIAH - Archbishop Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchy of South America

+ DANIEL - Archbishop Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora

+ ILARION - Bishop Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

+ ANDRIY - Bishop Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada



† B A R T H O L O M E W

BY GOD'S MERCY

ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE-NEW ROME AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH: MAY THE GRACE, PEACE AND MERCY
OF CHRIST RISEN IN GLORY BE WITH YOU ALL

Dearest brother Hierarchs and beloved children in the Lord,

Having arrived at Holy Pascha and becoming partakers of the joy of the Resurrection, we praise the Lord of glory, who trampled down death by

death and resurrected with Him the entire race of Adam, opening for us all the gates of paradise.

The splendid Resurrection of Christ is the confirmation that what prevails in the life of the world is not death, but the Savior who abolished the dominion of death. Formerly known to us as the Word without flesh and subsequently as the Word who assumed flesh for us on account of love for humankind, who died as man and was risen with might as God, He is the Savior who will come again in glory to fulfil the Divine Economy.

The mystery and experience of the Resurrection constitutes the core of the ecclesiastical life. The radiant worship, the sacred mysteries, the life of prayer, fasting and asceticism, pastoral ministry and good witness in the world – all of these emanate the fragrance of Paschal joy. The life of the faithful in the Church is a daily Pascha, “a joy from above,” “the joy of salvation,” as well as the “salvation as joy.”[1]

This is why the services of Holy and Great Week are not gloomy but filled with the victorious power of the Resurrection. There, we discover that the Cross does not have the last word in the plan for the salvation of humankind and the world. This is foreshadowed already on the Saturday of Lazarus. The raising from the dead of Christ’s intimate friend is a prefigurement of the “common resurrection.” The hymn “Today is hung upon the wood [of the Cross]” comes to a climax in the invocation “Show us, too, your glorious Resurrection.” Before the Epitaphios, we chant “I magnify your Passion, I praise your burial, together with your Resurrection.” And during the Paschal service, we resoundingly declare the true meaning of the Cross: “For behold, through the Cross, joy has come into the whole world.”

The “chosen and holy day” of Pascha is the dawn of the “eighth day,” the first-fruit of the “new creation.” The experience of our own resurrection, the great “miracle of my salvation.”[2] It is the lived affirmation that the Lord suffered and was led to death for our sake and that He rose from the dead for us “foreshadowing for us the resurrection for boundless ages.”[3] Throughout the Paschal period, we hymn with unparalleled poetry the anthropological meaning of the resplendent Resurrection of Christ, the Passover of humankind from slavery to genuine freedom, “the progression and ascension from below to the above and to the promised land.”[4] This salvific renewal in Christ is realized in the Church as a dynamic extension of the Eucharistic ethos in the world, as “speaking the truth in love,” as synergy with God for the transfiguration of the world, so that the world may be rendered an image of the fullness of the final revelation of the divine love in the Kingdom of the last times. Living in the risen Lord means proclaiming the Gospel “to the ends of the earth,” in the manner of the Apostles; it is the witness in practice of the

grace that has appeared and the expectation of the "new creation," where "death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more." (Rev. 21.4)

Faith in the Resurrection of Christ and in our own co-resurrection does not deny the painful presence of death, pain and the cross in the life of the world. We do not suppress the harsh reality or secure for ourselves, through faith, a psychological assurance before death. However, we know that the present life is not life in its entirety, that here we are "sojourners," that we belong to Christ and that we are journeying to His eternal Kingdom. The presence of pain and death, no matter how tangible these may be, does not constitute the ultimate reality. That lies in the definitive abolition of death. In the Kingdom of God there is neither pain nor death, but never-ending life. "Before your precious Cross," we chant, "death is terrifying for human beings; but after your glorious Passion, humankind is terrifying for death." [5] Faith in Christ grants us power, perseverance and patience to endure trials. Christ is the one who "heals us from every illness and delivers us from death." He is the one who has suffered for us and has revealed to us that God is "always for us" and that God's love for us belongs intrinsically to God's truth. This hopeful voice of divine love is echoed in Christ's words to the paralytic "take courage, my child" (Matt. 9.2) and to the woman with the issue of blood "take courage, daughter" (Matt. 9.22), in His words "take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16.33) before the Passion, and to the imprisoned Apostle of the Gentiles, threatened by death, "take courage, Paul" (Acts 23.11).

The present pandemic of the novel coronavirus has demonstrated how fragile we are as human beings, how easily we are dominated by fear and despondency, how frail our knowledge and self-confidence appear, how antiquated the notion is that death comprises an event at the end of life and that forgetting or suppressing death is the proper way of dealing with it. Limit situations prove that we are incapable of handling our existence resolutely, when we believe that death is an invincible reality and insurmountable boundary. It is difficult to remain human without the hope of eternity. This hope lives in the hearts of all doctors, nurses, volunteers, donors and all those generously supporting their suffering brothers and sisters in a spirit of sacrifice, offering and love. In this indescribable crisis, they radiate resurrection and hope. They are the "Good Samaritans" that, at the risk of their own lives, pour oil and wine on wounds; they are the modern-day "Cyrenaeans" on the Golgotha of those lying in illness.

With these thoughts, most honorable Hierarchs and dearest children in the Lord, we glorify the name of the Risen Lord which is above all names, the source of life from His own light, who illumines the universe with the light of the Resurrection. And we pray to Him, the physician of our souls

and bodies, who grants life and resurrection, that in His ineffable loving-kindness He may condescend to the human race, in order to grant us the precious gift of health and direct our steps on the straight ways, to vouchsafe the divine gift of our freedom in the world, foreshadowing its perfection in the heavenly Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Christ is Risen!

At the Phanar, Holy Pascha 2020

† Bartholomew of Constantinople

Your fervent supplicant to the Risen Lord

[1] *The Journals of Father Alexander Schmemmann 1973-1983* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), 137.

[2] *Gregory the Theologian, On the Holy Pascha*, PG 36.664.

[3] *Gregory Palamas, On the Holy Ascension*, PG 151.277.

[4] *Gregory the Theologian, op. cit.*, 636.

[5] *Doxastikon of the Vespers of September 27*.



Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the Great and Holy Pascha

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

My Beloved Christians, Νῦν πάντα πεπλήρωται φῶτός...Now all things are filled with light...(Paschal Canon, Ode 2)

In this time of darkness: through the most difficult Lent in memory, through a radical reduction of our lives and livelihood, through the threat of sickness on an unprecedented scale, and the through the grievous loss of family, friends, and neighbors taken from us too soon, we have finally arrived at the dawn.

Like the Myrrh-Bearing Women, going to the Tomb λίαν πρωί, ὀρθρου βαθέος—"very early in the morning, in the deep of the dawn"—we are yet in the depths of a darkness from which we pray to be delivered. But we hold fast to the promise of this night: Καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν. And the light shines on in the darkness, never overcome by the darkness. (John 1:5)

Indeed, and in very truth, "Now all things are filled with light!" The Light of Christ, Who is Himself the Light of the world, can never be extinguished. It chases away the shadow of even the darkest soul, and it burns most brightly in the human heart, which with every beat sings praises to the Lord of Glory.

He fills the world with His Light, enlightening our souls through love, forgiveness, compassion and mercy. And if this year we cannot pass that light from candle to candle, we can still pass that same light from heart to heart. The holiest fire that burns without destroying is love, for our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). Indeed, God loved the world so intensely that there was no suffering that He would not embrace in order to enfold us in His love. On His Precious and Life-Giving Cross, He showed us with one word that His Passover, His Pascha from death to life, would be the fulfillment for us all: Τετέλεσται! "It is accomplished!"

But now Christ is risen from the dead! Νυνὶ δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν! (I Cor. 15:20) He is the firstfruits of them that slept in death, and as Lord of both the living and the dead, He is the promise, the "Amen," of our future life in eternity.

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, let us rejoice in the light of the Resurrection that shines across the Heavens, around the globe, and in our hearts. This dawn knows no horizon line; it shines even in the depths of hades.

Embrace the light with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Share it with everyone in gratitude and gentleness. Recognize its power to transform you and transfigure the world. And know, by faith, that the shadows we experience today are fleeting, cast by the Light Who is come upon us to dispel every darkness, and to raise us up with Him to everlasting light and life!

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

†ELPIDOPHOROS, Archbishop of America

The Closure of Our Churches

We must receive the closure of our churches with a peaceful heart

I remember hearing, early on in my monastic life, of a holy elder who lived as a hermit, far from any group of other monks, and deprived of the chance to participate in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Hearing of this, I thought to myself, how could such a man survive without the Holy Body and Blood of the Saviour? How could this hermit experience the saving grace that comes from the Eucharist, while living alone in a mountain cabin, far from any church?

When asking the elder who'd shared this story of a hermit who'd not received the Eucharist in years, he reminded me of Saint Mary of Egypt, who'd received only once in her life, yet is venerated today as one of the greatest of saints, even to the point that we commemorate her twice each year, during the Great Fast and Passion Week. Saint Mary never partook of any of the Great Feasts of the Church, including the Nativity of Christ, the Annunciation, Pentecost, and not even Holy Pascha!

My own Elder Dimitry of Santa Rosa, told me that hermits would fast as if preparing for Holy Communion, reading the services in their chapels, and would "commune" by drinking Holy Water and eating particles of the Holy Bread taken by communicants following the reception of the Holy Mysteries, noetically receiving Holy Communion as if from Holy Angels.

So, being deprived of participation in the Holy Eucharist, are we filled with judgement against our bishops for the closure of our churches, obeying the dictates of our governmental authorities who are trying to keep the population of our cities safe from the ravages of this pandemic? Or are we humbly worshipping before the Throne of God, having created a domestic church for ourselves? Do we complain that our local church is closed down, while ignoring the fact that such closures are wonderful opportunities for us to replace one parish with four hundred domestic churches?

Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica tells us, "Our life depends on the kind of thoughts we nurture. If our thoughts are peaceful, calm, meek, and kind, then that is what our life is like. If our attention is turned to the circumstances in which we live, we are drawn into a whirlpool of thoughts and can have neither peace nor tranquility."

Saint Seraphim of Sarov said that if we "acquire peace, a thousand around us will be saved." While each of us has been created in the image of God, our thoughts directly influence both those around us, and even extend to affect the entire cosmos. If we focus on the negative, those negative thoughts impact everyone around us, and even the whole world. The Elder Thaddeus tells us we can be either very good, or very bad, depending on the thoughts and desires we breed.

There is a lot that is wrong with the world, and the Covid-19 pandemic that is wreaking havoc around the globe must be seen as having begun with us. If there is to be peace in our world, it must begin with me. If hatred, anger, envy, lust, and spite, are to end, it must end with me. Likewise, if this pandemic is to come to an end, it must begin with me.

When we allow destructive thoughts to destroy our peace, the peace around us is destroyed. We should not blame our governmental authorities, nor our bishops, for the closure of our churches, because of this pandemic that is ravaging our cities, is radiating from us. Blame for all that is wrong with the world, can not be placed beyond our own hearts.

If this Holy Week and Pascha leaves us spiritually depleted, because we can not attend services in our parish, and we are left immersed in the blame game, we will have no one to blame but ourselves. That God is allowing this terrible virus to lay waste our world, must be seen as a wakeup call for all of us. If we truly see this pandemic for what it truly is, we will have all the more reason to shout out on Pascha, even if alone in our apartments, "Christ is Risen", and perhaps really feel the truth of these words for the very first time.

Love in Christ, Abbot Tryphon



Bill Marianes ☩

During Orthodox Holy Week I wish to avoid controversies. As a result, I have patiently not responded to the critics of our Hierarchs who wisely prioritized the health and well-being of ALL our faithful (over our personal desires) by temporarily changing the way we celebrate Christ's passion and resurrection. So rather than wade into this unproductive dialogue myself, please allow me to offer a few brilliant insights (shared by Metropolitan Alexios) from the very pious and inspirational Gerondissa Thekla of the Convent of the Panagia Panagoritissa in Quebec, Canada.

I hope you read these next few paragraphs to hear an amazing and uplifting story of faith, but for those whose attention span is too short, let me offer the spoiler alert conclusion I reach at the end based on Gerondissa's teachings as modified by our U.S. numerical reality:

"THE TEMPTER SHUT 2,000 CHURCHES; LET US OPEN 375,000. MAY EACH HOME BECOME A CHURCH. If we do this, instead of closing down the churches, they will grow and spread and WHOLE CITIES WILL BECOME CHURCHES."

Here in a few short paragraphs is her personal witness which we can all take to heart:

To summarize, when the Gerondissa first entered the monastic life, a lack of monks and priests meant that her convent did not receive the

Eucharist on the Great Feasts. The Abbess writes that instead of complaining or becoming angry (as the Devil wishes), "We would fast as if preparing for Holy Communion, we would gather together in our chapel which was an extension to a hallway... We would read the services and at the end, our Most Holy Gerondissa Makrina would "commune" us by giving us Great Holy Water and Holy Bread. She would always counsel us that, "If we would be as we should be spiritually, then it is possible noetically to receive Holy Communion from Holy Angels, just like we have read many times in the lives of the Saints."

Speaking about her CURRENT personal situation where she lives in Canada, Gerondissa writes regarding this pandemic that, "The tempter wanted to close the churches; let us make our homes into churches. He shut 11 churches; let us open 11 thousand. May each home become a church; let prayer be raised like a torch of fire towards heaven; let the incense fragrance all the neighborhoods; may the candle and the vigil lamp always be lit. Let us attend the services through electronic correspondence, praying together... If we do this, instead of closing down the churches, they will grow and spread and whole cities will become churches. Then God will give His blessing, and seeing our repentance and our faith, He will cast away this evil plague and give us the freedom along with our churches to live many years working for Him."

Gerondissa Thekla goes on to describe the "...many heavenly moments which we never encountered again even after when we had a permanent priest and would serve forty-day liturgies... The chapel would be fragrant as if someone had sprinkled it all over with myrrh. Our eyes would stream with endless tears. Our heart would leap from the Grace of God. On the days that we supposedly "communed", without even realizing it, we would speak softly because we felt as if we had partaken in some sacred ceremony. Saying the prayer, our mouth would taste as if we had taken a very fragrant candy. We would feel the presence of Holy Communion, even though we had not received it... No matter what I write, it is not possible to describe the feeling of Christ's grace that we lived back in those days of deprivation, because there are not words to express this."

If you still feel sadness at missing Divine Liturgy, think of Gerondissa Thekla and St. Mary of Egypt and recall what St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?" (Corinthians 3:16)

If you've read this far, let me repeat the moral of the story with the numbers changed to reflect the estimate number of Orthodox churches and Orthodox homes in the U.S.:

"HE (the tempter) SHUT 2,000 CHURCHES; LET US OPEN 375,000. MAY EACH HOME BECOME A CHURCH."

Joe Becigneul January 27 ☺

An old man meets a young man who asks: "Do you remember me?"

And the old man says no. Then the young man tells him he was his student, and the teacher asks: "What do you do, what do you do in life?"

The young man answers: "Well, I became a teacher."

"ah, how good, like me?" Asks the old man.

"Well, yes. In fact, I became a teacher because you inspired me to be like you."

The old man, curious, asks the young man at what time he decided to become a teacher. And the young man tells him the following story:

"One day, a friend of mine, also a student, came in with a nice new watch, and I decided I wanted it and I stole it, I took it out of his pocket.

Shortly after, my friend noticed the flight and immediately complained to our teacher, who was you. Then you went to the class:

'This student's watch was stolen during classes today. Whoever stole it, please return it.'

I didn't give it back because I didn't want to. Then you closed the door and told us all to get up and you were going to search our pockets one by one until the watch was found. But you told us to close our eyes, because you would only look for his watch if we all had our eyes closed.

So we did, and you went from pocket to pocket, and when you went through my pocket, you found the watch and took it. You kept searching everyone's pockets, and when you were done you said: 'open your eyes. We have the watch.'

You didn't tell me and you never mentioned the episode. You never said who stole the watch either. That day you saved my dignity forever. It was the most shameful day of my life.

But this is also the day my dignity was saved and I decided not to become a thief, a bad person, etc. You never said anything, nor even scold me or took me aside to give me a moral lesson, I received your message clearly.

And thanks to you, I understood what a real educator needs to do. Do you remember this episode, professor?

And the professor answers: 'I remember the situation, the stolen watch, which I was looking for in everyone's pocket, but I didn't remember you, because I also closed my eyes while looking.'

This is the essence of teaching: If to correct you must humiliate; you don't know how to teach "

All,

The quality isn't great but we were able to get the entire service together and online for anyone interested.

Here's the direct link: <https://youtu.be/fZNdEmBTUs4>

Thanks!

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**CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!
CHRISTOS VOSKRES! VOISTINU VOSKRES!
CHRISTOS ANESTI! ALITHOS ANESTI!**

THANK YOU ALL!

To those who came out to church on Pascha to have your Easter Baskets blessed!

To all who viewed the YouTube video of our Pascha service through the internet...see the link above!

To all who prayed—for our parish family, for our front line workers—doctors, nurses, aides, EMTs, firefighters, police officers, grocery workers, janitors, postal service employees—all who make it possible to live as normal a life as possible!

To those who donated—to food banks, to local charities, to their neighbors, to friends in need, to someone you don't know!

To ALL of you...who make us proud to say we are ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS...fulfilling the commandments of Christ and His Church, by loving one another as He has Loved YOU!

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

May Our Risen Savior fill your lives with His Grace and His Love, all the days of your life!

In HIS LOVE,

**Fr. Bob, Pani Gina, Reader Alex, Matt, our Parish Board,
and our Holy Ghost Parish Family!**