



ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL  
ORTHODOX BISHOPS  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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*Office of the Chairman*

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*The day of Resurrection; let us be radiant for the festival, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, brethren, even to those that hate us, 'Let us forgive all things on the Resurrection', and so let us cry, 'Christ has risen from the dead: by death he has trampled on death, and to those in the graves given life' (Paschal Sticheron).*

Pascha 2016

To the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Members of Philanthropic Organizations, the Youth and Youth Workers, and the entire Orthodox Christian Family in the United States of America

Beloved and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ,

For more than forty days, we have walked upon the most blessed path of Great and Holy Lent. During this time, we have engaged in a spiritual struggle to grow closer to Christ; we have increased our fasting; we have intensified our prayers; we have expanded our charitable love for our neighbor; we have cried, confessed, and repented. Perhaps more significant than any of our individual achievements is the fact that we have embarked upon this journey as brothers and sisters, joined to one another as members of the Body of Christ. In this way, our common spiritual labors do not lead in isolation but in communion; together we can offer the common proclamation:

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

This salvific message is proclaimed by each of us in our daily lives. However, it is also a message that is proclaimed by the Church, that is, by all men and women, ordained and lay, young and old. In this way, each time we proclaim the Resurrection of Christ, we convey to the world a message of communion and solidarity with God and with the least of our brethren. Our calling to charity, service, and love is even more pronounced during this period of joy. After all, how can we ever proclaim the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Who so loved the world that He *humbled himself to the point of death* (Phil 2: 8), if we don't first express our love for our brothers and sisters? (cf. 1 John 4: 21).



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For forty days following Holy Pascha, as we greet each other with the Paschal message, *Christ is Risen*, we must remain vigilant and search for bold new ways to share the unwaning Light of Pascha with those whose lives have been overwhelmed by darkness and despair. Let us remember in thought and prayer—and in word and action—the countless men, women, and children who face unspeakable hardships and persecutions in all corners of the world. May we bear witness *to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*, and in so doing, may we not only become recipients of God’s abundant grace (Acts 4:33), but also be transformed into merciful hands that offer to our spiritually-thirsty world the eternal waters of the Resurrection.

All of us, the Hierarchs of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States, with profound love extend to you our fervent prayers that you and your loved ones continue to *walk in the newness of life* of the Holy Resurrection (Romans 6:4). Together, we join you in declaring, with one voice and one mind,

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

+Archbishop Demetrios of America  
Chairman