



МОНРЕАЛЬСКАЯ И КАНАДСКАЯ ЕПАРХИЯ
РУССКОЙ ПРАВОСЛАВНОЙ ЦЕРКВИ ЗАГРЯНИЦЕЙ

DIOCÈSE DE MONTRÉAL ET DU CANADA • L'ÉGLISE RUSSE ORTHODOXE HORS FRONTIÈRES
DIOCESE OF MONTREAL AND CANADA • RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

ЕПАРХИАЛЬНАЯ КАНЦЕЛЯРИЯ
DIOCESAN CHANCELLERY

EASTER EPISTLE

To the clergy and God-saved flock of the Diocese of Canada

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

It is the Day of Resurrection! Let us be radiant, O ye people! Pascha, the Lord's Pascha! The Paschal chant which so many of us know from childhood puts into words the state of our hearts, which are overflowing with the triumph of Easter. On this great day of the Glory of the Lord all the faithful are filled with the gift from the Risen Lord – the joy of the Resurrection of Christ. Therefore, "if any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him not be fearful on account of his lateness; for the Master, Who is jealous of His honour, receiveth the last even as the first. He giveth rest to him that cometh at the eleventh hour, as well as to him that hath laboured from the first hour", says St. John Chrysostom in his Catechetical homily on Holy Pascha. This miraculous gift has already been witnessed by those who lived at the time of the Resurrection. It was also given to our forefathers, to those who went into exile after the fall of the divinely ordained rule of the Tsars, and those who remained in Russia and suffered persecutions and war. And today, when forces that are hostile to Christ are trying in vain to destroy even those sacred places where Holy Russia was born in the holy Baptism, the joy of the Resurrection remains with us. It reigns supreme in the hearts of Russian soldiers defending the Motherland, in the hearts of their fathers and mothers, and in the hearts of all Orthodox Russians, wherever they may be, at home or abroad.

It was for good reason that the Apostle Paul wrote to a nascent Christian community: "Who shall separate us from the love of God: tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?" (Rom. 8:35). The adversities mentioned are, in fact, those endured by the Christians of the first centuries, and, closer to us, by the holy New Martyrs of Russia. Some Russian Orthodox believe that the gates of Paradise get opened on the very first day of Christ's Resurrection, and remain open until the Leave-taking of Easter. There's also a

touching legend from the time of the Old Rus' that even the torments of hell are eased during these days, as sinners are left in peace from Holy Thursday up to the day of Pentecost.

Today we “celebrate the death of death, the destruction of hades, the beginning of another life eternal”. For, in the words of His Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), we are called to be sons of the Resurrection, and in this lies the essence of our hope. So let us repeat the marvellous words of the Psalmist, which are proclaimed many times today in the Church of Christ: “This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein” (Ps. 117:24).

Truly He is Risen!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Archbishop Gabriel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

GABRIEL
Archbishop of Montreal and Canada

CHRIST'S PASCHA, 2023.