

THE PASCHAL MESSAGE

OF THE BISHOP OF SOUROZH

ELISEY

TO THE CLERGY AND FAITHFUL OF THE DIOCESE OF SOUROZH OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Reverend fathers and pious people,
beloved in the Lord,
dear brothers and sisters!

My heartfelt greetings to you
on the Great Feast of Holy Pascha!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

May the Divine power of these words run over like a flame of grace and pass from one to another in hearts afire with faith, conveying in an abundance of the joy that is not of this world the saving news of the Rising of the Son of God, Who passed through the darkness of death and revealed to us the glory of His Resurrection!

Of all our Orthodox feasts, the Pascha of Christ stands out by its special triumph and joy – it is the feast of feasts and the triumph of triumphs. For this reason very many do their utmost to get to church on Easter night: not only believers, but even those who are far from the Church, but who in the secret of their hearts, perhaps unwittingly, in an intimate thirst for the heavenly world, strive to enter into the life-giving streams of Paschal joy.

The generous Lord accepts even the last as the first – says St John Chrysostom and He invites each of us: Enter ye all into the joy of your Lord. Those who abstained and those who were idle, honour this day. Those who fasted and those who did not fast, make merry now...All of ye take pleasure in the feast of faith. All of you accept the riches of grace!

Following this Paschal call, let us accept one another with love in our Church community: both those who as infants partook of Grace and those who have a conscious experience of spiritual life, as well as those who came to us only today.

Russian and English, Ukrainian and Moldovan, pious and negligent, rich and poor, those who are devoted to distant homelands and those who have found their new haven in this blessed land – may everyone in the parishes of our Sourozh Diocese abide in the unity of the faith and the spirit, in the unique witness to the Resurrection of Christ, in unwavering faithfulness to our Mother-Church.

For many who are only beginning to find the way to the Church and are confirming themselves in their Church life, the celebration of the Pascha of Christ is transfigured from an outward cultural tradition into the Sacred Revelation of our Resurrection in Christ.

Our Pascha is a spiritual liberation and the passage from the vicious circle of dependency on the outward world, from material values that corrupt with time, to the eternal values of the Kingdom of the Risen Christ, where man learns to work together with God – the Source of true and life-giving Love.

Our Pascha means partaking of the saving Sacrifice of Christ. Going up to the Cross in His humility, the Son of God gave Himself as a sacrifice, so that we in reply might hasten to follow Christ on our path of the cross and accept His gift of eternal Life, the gift of the Resurrection.

Dear members of the clergy, all who work for the Church, my beloved brothers and sisters, our compatriots and all the members of the flock of the Russian Orthodox Church who live in the British Isles, my heartfelt greetings to you all on the feast of Holy Pascha! It is my wish that the light of the Resurrection will scatter any remaining shadows lurking in our hearts and fill them with the life-giving rays of the Love and Mercy of God!

CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!

***+ ELISEY
BISHOP OF SOUROZH***

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London