

To the Venerable Pastors, God-loving Monastics and Devout Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America

Dearly Beloved in the Lord:

Christ is Risen!

Together with those who came *before the dawn* with Mary, we have come to that first day of the week and have *found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher*. With astonishment, we ponder the question of the Angel: “*Why do you seek among the dead, as though He were mortal man, Him who abides in everlasting light?*” And with wonder, we *behold the grave-clothes* lying in the empty tomb as a powerful sign of the reality of the resurrection of Christ, the Conqueror of Death.

Like the Myrrhbearers and the Apostles who ran to the sepulcher, all of us have taken a journey from the darkness and confusion of this world to the light and truth of the resurrection. We have sailed across the great sea of the Fast, asking the Lord to take from us sloth, despair, lust for power and idle talk so that we might replace them with love for Christ, compassion for our fellow human beings and care for all creation. We have been pilgrims with the Lord through the barrenness of His life-giving Passion and have tasted the wonder that is the “universally nourishing work of the Cross” (St Timothy of Antioch).

Now, we are renewed with an apostolic zeal that finds its source both in the Cross and the empty tomb, and receives its fulfillment in the grace-filled work undertaken by the twelve Apostles as they divided among themselves the preaching of the Resurrection to the ends of the world. We are reminded that we are all, within the holy Church, on what St Herman of Alaska calls a “pilgrimage of the apostolic word,” and that at every moment of that pilgrimage, we need to measure ourselves against Christ, and against those who, through martyrdom, through asceticism and through missionary labors, have shown themselves to be witnesses to the power of the life-creating cross of Christ and to the glory of His Kingdom.

Today we make a commitment to Our Lord and His Holy Church to fight the good fight of faith, and to continue our journey on the path of righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness and gentleness (1 Timothy 6:11-12). As we rejoice today in the victory over death, and continue on our pilgrimage, being transformed from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18), let us remember that regardless of the path our pilgrimage takes us on, we are all called to be Apostles and witnesses of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ.

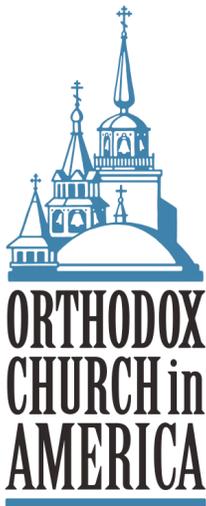
Therefore, let us take up the challenge of the Angel offered to those who stood at the empty tomb, and together with the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Ascetics and the Missionaries, let us *Go quickly and proclaim to the world that the Lord is risen and has slain death; for He is the Son of God, who saves the race of man*.

May the grace that today shines forth so abundantly from the tomb sustain our joy and provide the light for our holy pilgrimage leading us to the life of the world to come.

With love in the risen Lord,



†Tikhon  
Archbishop of Washington  
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