



May 01, 2016

## P A S C H A 2 0 1 6

*Let all partake of the feast of faith. Let all receive the riches of goodness. Let no one lament his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn his transgressions, for pardon has dawned from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Saviour's death has set us free. He that was taken by death has annihilated it! He descended into hades and took hades captive! . . . "O death, where is thy sting? O hades, where is thy victory?" Christ is risen, and you are overthrown! Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen! Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice! Christ is risen, and life reigns! Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in a tomb! For Christ, being raised from the dead, has become the First-fruits of them that slept. To him be glory and might unto ages of ages. Amen. (An Excerpt of St John Chrysostom's Paschal Homily)*

Beloved and Christ-loving Clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania,

I embrace and greet you with a holy kiss in the Name of our Resurrected Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and, together with you and Orthodox Christians throughout the world, I joyfully proclaim that Christ is risen! Христос Воскресе! Χριστός ἀνέστη! Hristos a înviat! Cristo ha resucitado!

On this radiant Feast of Feasts I share with you, my dearly beloved spiritual children, the above passage from St. John Chrysostom's Paschal Homily by way of reminder to put all that comes our way in the context of eternity. We have been given eternal Life as a free gift. Let us guard it closely and not fall prey to the devil. Let us be living Epistles and living icons of the Lord in thought, word and deed. May our Lord continue to look down from heaven, visiting, establishing and perfecting this Holy Vine which He has planted with His own right hand.

Asking your God-pleasing prayers, I remain your unworthy father in Christ,

+ Mark

Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania