



BULGARIAN PATRIARCHATE • HOLY SYNOD

PATRIARCHAL AND SYNODICAL PASCHAL EPISTLE

2025

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CHRIST IS RISEN!

BELOVED IN THE LORD CHILDREN OF OUR HOLY CHURCH,

The news about the Resurrection of the Son of God is joy for the human heart. Our testimony to the Victor of death, the crucified and resurrected Saviour our Lord Jesus Christ is a testimony of joy, faith and hope. And that is why our sermon is about the triumph of life – about the victory that has been kept, because of us, by our God and Creator Who is the Life Itself and the only Source of life. Who out of love created the world and man and Who – again as an expression of His boundless love – became our Saviour from the sin, decay and death (cf. John 3:16; 10:10). On the Day of the Resurrection, we are praising the victory of Life.

The faith of the Church in the miracle of the Resurrection is a faith that is founded on the personal testimony. The voice of the Church even to this day is the voice of the myrrh-bearing women – these first witnesses of the Resurrection. This is also the voice of the holy apostles, who throughout forty days after Pascha were communicating with the Resurrected Saviour and became “*eyewitnesses of his majesty*” (2 Petr. 1:16). This is also the voice of Saint Thomas the Apostle, who, after having personally become convinced in the truthfulness of the Resurrection, confessed: “*My Lord and my God!*” (John 20:28). This is the voice of all the saints who with the grace of God won in the fight against sin and became communicants of the Resurrection of Christ. This is the voice of the holy Church, which even today does not stop proclaiming the good news and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God accessible to all the people, through the faith in the Resurrected Saviour and through life in accordance with His commandments.

Since the incarnation and until the very end, the earthly life of the God-Man Christ is an implementation of divine plan, about which the Holy Bible testifies already on its first pages: “*let us make man according to our image and likeness*” (Gen. 1:26). God’s image, according to which we have been made, could not ascend to assimilation to God while the man, the crown of God’s creation, remained the captive of the sin and death. Namely because of this did Christ incarnate and live among us – “*full of grace and truth*” (John 1:14), having adopted our nature that has been injured by sin – so that He could renew and glorify it, so that “*as many as received him, [...] those who believe in his Name*” could “*become God’s children*” (John 1:12) and participants in this renewal and transfiguration, which in accordance with God’s revelation, we anticipate in the reality of the new creation and in the mystery of the universal resurrection.

The act of the men's salvation has been continuing for already two millennia in those who are Christ's. Following strictly the order of the Saviour (cf. Matt. 28:19), the Church has not stopped preaching and baptizing, and the Lord invisibly for our eyes continues adding to it such people who are being saved (cf. Acts 2:47). Of course, there also continues to act "*the mystery of lawlessness*" (2 Thess. 2:7), of opposing God's will, which nowadays reaches unseen in the human history dimensions and scopes. However, we know that the triumph of the ungodly spirit, of the evil and sin is already only fictitious, as the victory kept by the Resurrected from the dead Son of God and Son of Man is a beginning of a new era – an era in which death has been enfeebled and has been cancelled and it does not have the final say, because in the mystery of the Cross, the Tomb and the Resurrection it was "*swallowed up in victory*" (1 Cor. 15:54).

Let the joy of the news for the Resurrection of Christ be constantly with us – as the Saviour Himself appeals to us in the Holy Gospel (cf. Matt. 28:9) and as His apostles also appeal to us repeatedly: "*Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I will say, rejoice! [...] The Lord is at hand!*" (Phil. 4:4-5). Even in the deepest sorrow, hopelessness and despair – rejoice! Even in moments of doubts and most severe trials – rejoice! Even facing the whole fictitious power and omnipotence of the evil – rejoice! Because, as the Church triumphantly exults today, "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!" (*Troparion of Pascha*).

We are whole-heartedly greeting with the holiday of the Resurrection of Christ all faithful children of our Holy Church – those in our Motherland and those far away from it, with the archpastoral wishes for peace and joy in the Resurrected from the dead Lord Jesus Christ.

May God's all-forgiving and all-conquering love and great mercy, grace and the communion in the Most Holy Spirit of God be with all of us!

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HEAD OF THE HOLY SYNOD
† **DANIIL**
PATRIARCH OF BULGARIA AND METROPOLITAN OF SOFIA

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Note: This Epistle is meant to be read at the church pulpit on the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ – Pascha, on 20th April 2025.