

Paschal Epistle to the God-loving Flock of the North American Diocese and to the Children of God in the Diaspora

From Bishop Stefan of Trenton and North America

“Come on this auspicious day of the Resurrection, let us partake of the fruit of the new vine of divine gladness of the kingdom of Christ” (Paschal Canon Ode VIII).

Christ was the unblemished Sacrifice for us, and by His death He *trampled down death and unto those in the graves He granted life*. He *“raised up Adam from corruption and abolished death”* (Paschal Exaposteilarion) and renews us earthborn ones! He did **everything** on **our** behalf and **for** us, for the sake of our eternal blessedness. Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ is the **fullness** of all good – the fullness of our Paschal joy and gladness. *“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”* (Matt. 28:18) our Lord exclaims upon His Resurrection. Without any doubt everything that concerns the Church of Christ, including everything happening currently, occurs by the will of God. What can we wish ourselves and others? That we should fulfill the will of God. That we should all with one mouth and one heart glorify Christ’s Resurrection. But this is possible only if we rid ourselves of those passions which under the guise of piety and zeal for the purity of Christ’s Church, have led “these little ones” in the opposite direction: toward further splintering and Church turmoil.

Many, without noticing it themselves have adopted a sergianist ideology, forgetting that the Church, by God’s will saves **us** and not we save it and have undertaken to save the Church from imaginary heretics and schismatics, which causes distress and disdain, and hence does not contribute to our coming together to the glory of God, but only deepens the split among fellow brethren.

Of particular significance for us all are the words of the Paschal matins stichera: *“It is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant for the feast, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, brethren, even to them that hate us, let us forgive all things on the Resurrection.”* (Matins stichera).

May the joyous, salvific and peaceful Pascha abide with all of you.

Indeed has Christ risen!

+*Bishop Stefan*

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