

Rector's Letter, May, 2017

Dear brothers and sisters:

“Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!” We are living through this season of the Lord's Pascha, a season of life, of joy, of brightness, of “chocolate eggs and Jesus risen!” as a boy was once heard to say.

The Lord has opened the path from death to life for us, and we may freely and joyfully follow. The only difficulty is that, for us, choosing life looks a lot like dying. This is not some arcane mystical theology. Every real decision requires turning away from — “being dead to” — all the other possibilities. If we dedicate ourselves to excelling in a sport, that means sacrificing time and energy that we might have used for learning something else (or just goofing off). If we get married, we “die” to any other possible mate. If we have had a heart attack, to preserve our life we must “be dead” to unhealthy foods.

In just the same way, our Lord calls us to live by dedicating ourselves entirely to God. As with excelling in a sport, this means we must be dead to distractions from what is most important: loving God and following His ways. As with marriage, we must be faithful and dead to anything that we are tempted to love more than God. Like someone confronting a deadly disease,

we must be dead to any “guilty pleasures” — sins, to give them a more honest and less attractive name — that would rob us of life.



For the Lord of Life, physically dying was the miracle; rising to life again was “only natural.” For us, dying physically is the the most natural thing in the world. Death is surer even than taxes. For us the miracle is living — really living, without fear, without contention, without resentment, but full of Life. That sort of life is not natural to us. It means giving up the hold we imagine we have on life and entrusting ourselves totally to the Life of All. It means dying to all those “earthly cares” and sins which so closely entangle us. It means beginning to die to our selves so that we can find our true self in Jesus Christ.

That sort of dying is hard. But finding eternal life without letting go of everything else is completely impossible. Let's choose life.

Christ is risen!

With love in Christ,

F. John S. Mosher

Around the Parish

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the beauty of our church: the choir, the altar servers, all those who provided hospitality at our lenten suppers, our artists who have been renovating the church, everyone who joined in the parish clean-up day, and everyone who has quietly put in the effort where it was necessary. May the Lord bless you!

As customary, we blessed graves at SS. Peter & Paul Cemetery on St. Thomas Sunday last month. If you would like to **bless a grave at another cemetery** during this Paschal season, please speak with Fr. Joshua to arrange a time.

After forty days, the Paschal Season concludes with the **Ascension of Our Lord**, on May 25, when our Lord completed the instruction of his disciples and ascended bodily to heaven, promising the gift of the Holy Spirit. We will celebrate on Wednesday, May 24, with Vespers and Liturgy at 6 PM.

The Feast of Pentecost follows ten days later, on Sunday, June 4. On that day, we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, when the apostles began their public preaching and the Church was revealed to all. Until that day, we honor our Lord's rising from the grave by remaining standing in prayer, but at Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost (immediately after the Divine Liturgy that Sunday), we kneel for the first time.



We are once more holding a **parish game night** on first Friday of the month, starting May 5. All are welcome, and several non-gamers bring a craft project to enjoy during the same time.

Youth Rally 2017 is set for August 7–12. Youth Rally is our annual diocesan summer camp for youth who have completed 5th grade and have not reached their 18th birthday. It takes place at the Campgrounds of the Greek Orthodox Saint Methodios Faith and Heritage Center, Contoocook, New Hampshire. We have had many enthusiastic participants in Youth Rally over the years, whether as **kids or adult volunteers**, and more are always welcome!

For further information and to request registration materials, please call or email Fr.

John Hopko, Youth Rally Director, at phone number (860) 582-3631, or email terryvilleorthodoxchurch@gmail.com. **NOTE: The deadline for registration is July 3.**

We also have an **appeal for adult volunteers for Youth Rally**, from Fr. John Hopko: We need active, healthy and committed adult men and women who are able to serve as cabin staff. Volunteers must be of legal adult age who are Orthodox Christians in “good standing.” “Good standing” means endorsed, without reservations, by their Orthodox Christian parish priest/father confessor, able to be entrusted with the care and guidance of young people. If you know of any person appropriate to serve as a Youth Rally volunteer staff member, ask them to contact Fr. John: phone (860) 582-3631 or email terryvilleorthodoxchurch@gmail.com.

The Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon on the Great and Holy Pascha 2017

To the Venerable Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy, Monastics, Distinguished Stewards, and the entire family of the Orthodox Church in America:
CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!



The radiant day of the Resurrection of Christ has dawned and our Paschal celebrations have bathed us in the glorious light of renewal and regeneration. Today is a completely new day, a day which began when the divine brilliance pierced and dispelled the darkness of Hades and ended with the remarkable explosion which took place when Eternal Life crushed death and corruption.

On this new and bright day, our faith is renewed along with that of the Myrrh-bearing Women standing by the open tomb; our hope is confirmed along with that of the Apostles on the road to Emmaus; and our love is strengthened along with that of the Mother of God who

remained ever at the side of her Son. Even if we count ourselves among the numbers of those who previously denied or deserted the crucified Lord, such hesitation or shame cannot withstand the force of the new life of this day.

We know too well that there is no human being who lives and yet does not sin, and the consequences of the Fall are reflected in a world overshadowed by war, terrorism, and human misery. Nevertheless, this dark reality loses its hold on us today because we have tasted of the new drink from the fountain of incorruption which fills us with spiritual courage and divine hope.

This courage and hope are not simply fleeting emotions of the moment but rather an experience of the life of the risen Lord Who fills our hearts with such joy that every day and every moment of our existence we can sing paschal hymns such as this:

How divine! How beloved!
How sweet is Thy voice, O Christ!
For Thou hast faithfully promised to be with us
To the end of the world.
Having this as our anchor of hope,
We the faithful rejoice.

With my archpastoral blessing and love in the
Risen Lord,

† **TIKHON**

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

The nature of Christian love

from the First Epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians

There must be no time lost in putting an end to this state of affairs. We must fall on our knees before the Master and implore Him with tears graciously to pardon us, and bring us back again into the honorable and virtuous way of brothers who love one another. For that is the gateway of righteousness, the open gate to life.

Love binds us fast to God. Love casts a veil over sins innumerable. There are no limits to love's endurance, no end to its patience. Love is without servility, as it is without arrogance. Love knows no divisions, promotes no discord; all the works of love are done in perfect fellowship.

It was in love that all God's chosen saints were made perfect; for without love nothing is pleasing to Him. It was in love that the Lord drew us to Himself; because of the love He bore us, our Lord Jesus Christ, at the will of God, gave His blood for us — His flesh for our flesh, His life for our lives.

See then, dear friends, what a great and wondrous thing love is. Its perfection is beyond all words.... Let us beg and implore of His mercy that we may be purged of all earthly preferences for this man or that, and be found faultless in love.