



Reverend Fathers, Venerable Monastics, and Pious Faithful
of the Western American Diocese ROCOR:

Precious Children of the Church, my beloved flock:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

The rising of the Lord from the grave is the anticipation of faithful Christians each year, but for many people no more so than at present. A year ago, it was not possible to be in the churches for Pascha, on account of State restrictions relating to the pandemic, and this sad reality persisted for a very long time. But God is merciful, and recently we have been able, in this God-preserved Diocese, to return to a life of more-or-less liturgical “normalcy,” celebrating and participating in the Sacraments of the Church together, clergy and faithful united in our sacred worship.

There is always suffering and death before resurrection. This is the principal message we receive from the experience of Great Lent, and especially Holy Week. Christ defeats death and hades, but He does not do this without walking through the “shadow of death,” which indeed becomes more than a shadow: it becomes His reality, offering His life on the Cross. Suffering is not evaded by Christ, nor does He promise to Christians that they will escape it. Rather, He calls us to suffer with Him, that we might also die with Him and rise with Him. And so, as this past year has been one of suffering in different ways, including in our Church life, we have not despaired. Gifts of which we have been deprived, are returned to us; souls that have sorrowed are made joyful; and lives that felt pain and the sorrow of separation from normal Church life, taste again the joy of our sacramental life.

May the angelic pronouncement of this Feast of Feasts touch all your hearts on this day: “Christ is risen! Truly, He is risen!”

+ Archbishop Kyryl

19 April/2 May 2021