



GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA (EASTER)

Christ Is Risen!

THE HYMN

Resurrectional Hymn

"Christ has risen from the dead, having loosed the bonds of death; O earth, proclaim the good tidings of great joy; O heavens, praise the glory of God."

THE SERMON

Heaven and Earth Rejoice

By the grace of God, we have finally reached the most blessed Sunday of Great and Holy Pascha (Easter). It is time to celebrate the Feast of Feasts, the celebration of all celebrations, the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The human mind cannot fully comprehend what the Resurrection *truly* means. We simply feel our hearts overjoyed by the glorious Resurrection. This day marks the pinnacle of our faith, the highest point of our liturgical calendar. Everything in the Church revolves around the Resurrection. The Resurrection represents our strength and potential, the triumph all Christians look forward to. The sight of the crucified Redeemer filled our hearts with sorrow. We mourned His burial deep in our souls.

Today, however, everything dissolves by the *light* of the Resurrection, and a hopeful new life emerges. This is the purpose, the essence, and the meaning of our spiritual life. The inexpressible joy of the Resurrection prevails throughout the entire world. Everything shines from its never-setting light. "Christ is Risen," is triumphantly proclaimed to all humankind. Love that forgives every transgression, embraces us all. Heaven and earth re-

joice!

The Lord went down to Hades and gathered up around Him fallen humanity. Christ rises from the dead and shatters the oppression of death. The new life, which rises as of today without ever setting, fulfills God's promise to humanity. God tells us: my children, do not be afraid. Do not be disheartened. Have courage. You may have renounced Me. You may have disobeyed Me. You may have been mistaken. You may have abandoned Me. But I never deserted you, and I will never leave you. I became human for you to partake of My Divinity. I was crucified to take *your* sins upon Me. I descended into Hades to deliver *you* from the burden of death. I am Resurrected so that you may have eternal life with Me. I am your God and Father. You are my Creation, my beloved children. Run toward my embrace—I love you!

This is our God! This is our faith! It is all about joy and love. Come, sisters and brothers, let us celebrate today the joy of our spiritual adoption by grace. Let us experience the astonishing reality of our salvation. Let us put aside whatever weighs us down, preoccupies us, and keeps us enslaved to evil and malice. Let us move beyond sin and live for virtue. Let us celebrate the Resurrection and embrace one another. We are all children of the Resurrected Christ. We are all spiritual brothers and sisters. Let us focus our lives on repentance and forgiveness. And let us cry out with all our hearts: "Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life."