



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF DENVER

PASCHA 2017

Arise, O God judge the earth;
for you shall take an inheritance
in all the nations. *PSALM 81:8*

Beloved Clergy, Monastics, and Laity,

During the liturgical celebration of the release of the souls from Hades on Holy Saturday morning, known as the First Resurrection, at the appropriate time the celebrant comes forth from the holy sanctuary. He processes throughout the church chanting these words from the Book of Psalms, throwing out bay leaves which symbolize the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ who released all human souls from that dark prison once controlled by Satan.

Each year since the Apostolic period these prophetic words continue to be celebrated. But at the end of the age when our Lord returns in glory as the Bridegroom of the Church, these prophetic words will be fulfilled. This cosmic event will complete the prophesies of Holy Scripture and on that final Sabbath of His creation, the Lord will rest while beholding its perfection.

At the midnight celebration, just before the Lord's Day of Pascha, the people are invited to come forth and to receive the unfading light of the Lord's Resurrection as it comes forth from the darkened sanctuary in imitation of the divine Light which enters into the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem every Holy Saturday. This act speaks of our resurrection.

It is this annual world changing spectacle on Orthodox Christian Pascha which increases our faith, reminding us of the prayer our Lord has taught us in praying, "Thy Kingdom come."

May the unfading light of His glorious Resurrection remain in the hearts and minds of all His people. And may the eternal joy which our Lord grants to His people by inviting them into His coming Kingdom abide with you and your loved ones.

CHRIST IS RISEN!

With paternal joy,

+ Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver

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