

DIOCESE OF NEW ENGLAND ~ ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA



The Right Reverend BENEDICT

Bishop of Hartford and New England

Archpriest John Kreta

Chancellor

20 April 2025

Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!

To the clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of New England

Greetings in the Lord!

On this glorious feast of the Resurrection of Christ, the texts of our liturgy leave little to be said by anyone else. Nevertheless, it is good to reflect on what we sing at the end of the Paschal Stichera:

This is the day of resurrection: Let us be illumined by the feast! Let us embrace each other! Let us call “Brothers” even those that hate us, and forgive all by the resurrection. And so, let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

That is as radical today as it was when from the Cross Christ said, “Father, forgive them.” Let us ask the risen Lord to help us imitate him in this forgiveness, which for us Christians is not optional.

So in the Liturgy today, let us, “forgive all by the resurrection” and, with uplifted minds, “enjoy the Master’s hospitality and the Table of Life Immortal in the upper room; and let us hear the exalted teaching of the Word, whom we magnify” [*Canon of Holy Thursday, Ode 9, irmos*].

As St John Chrysostom says, “Enter all of you into the joy of our Lord! . . . You that have fasted, and you that have disregarded the Fast, rejoice today! The table is rich-laden; feast royally, all of you! . . . Let us all partake of the feast of faith! . . . Let no one mourn his transgressions, for pardon has dawned from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the

Savior's death has set us free! . . . Christ, being raised from the dead, has become the First-fruits of them that slept. To Him be glory and might unto ages of ages!"

May the joy of this day ever remain with all of us!

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