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EASTER PASTORAL LETTER
OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHS IN THE USA
TO THE PRIESTS, MONKS, BROTHERS, SISTERS, SEMINARIANS, AND DEAR FAITHFUL

CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!

As we enter the holy days of our Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection, the Church invites us to contemplate the mystery that begins with Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Our Lord entered the Holy City welcomed by crowds filled with joy. Children sang, "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel." The people of Jerusalem, together with the disciples, rejoiced as they welcomed Christ.

Yet each of them carried their own hopes and expectations. The people longed for a king who would transform their reality and free them from the oppression of Roman authority. Many expected a political liberator, a ruler who would restore earthly power and justice.

But Christ our Savior entered Jerusalem for another purpose: for His Passion, His Crucifixion, and His Resurrection.

Those who welcomed Him with palm branches would soon turn against Him and cry out for His crucifixion. The disciples who walked beside Him with joy would soon scatter in fear and abandon their Teacher.

When we reflect on this Gospel in the light of our own time, we see how deeply it speaks to our world today. Our world trembles under instability and suffering. Powerful forces promise a better tomorrow while seeking to conquer others in the name of justice or security. Political tensions at home and abroad, social divisions, violence, uncertainty, and moral confusion surround us. At the same time, Ukraine now enters yet another Holy Week of suffering, enduring devastation and fear, as if sharing in the wounds of Christ Himself. The nation continues to endure the illegal invasion of a brutal foreign regime that seeks not only to conquer territory but also to extinguish hope and life itself. In the midst of suffering and sacrifice, the people carry their own cross with courage and faith.

Yet the question remains: what changed the lives of the disciples after the darkness of Good Friday? What transformed their fear into courage, their uncertainty into hope?

The turning point came through their encounter with the Risen Lord.

The joy of the Resurrection always begins with a personal encounter with Christ. What caused the tears of Mary Magdalene to give way to the joy of Easter morning? Nothing less than meeting the risen Christ Himself. When the Lord called her by name, her grief was transformed into faith and joy. And after encountering the risen Savior, Mary Magdalene faithfully obeyed His command to go and proclaim the Good News of the Resurrection to the disciples.

The risen Christ desires that each of us experience this same joy of encountering Him. He calls us to live not for ourselves, but for Him—to be liberated from the sins that trap us in self-centeredness and to discover the blessing of Christ's self-giving love. No matter what may be happening in our

lives, we can still experience spiritual joy through the love of God and by living as God created us to live: in self-giving love.

The Easter Gospel is not only about new life in general, but about new life that comes to each of us personally. It is not only that Christ was raised from the dead, but that the risen Christ meets us and calls us by name. Easter is an encounter, a call, and a mission. “Go and tell what you have seen and heard.”

Christ is alive. And more than that—He has sought us out and called us by name.

Whatever our doubts and fears, whatever our failures and betrayals, whatever wounds we carry and try to protect—today is a new day. We are called to become witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus. We are called to bring the light of the Resurrection into every human situation: into joyful moments, making them even more beautiful, and into times of sorrow, bringing serenity and hope. Let us therefore experience the joy of Easter morning and radiate this joy through our lives. Let the mercy of Christ shine in our words and in our deeds. Just as Christ’s Resurrection brought hope and new life to His followers, so we too must hold fast to hope and work for a future of peace, knowing that Christ is always with us.

Our fervent prayer is that our Resurrected and Living Lord may bestow His peace and grace upon you and your loved ones, and upon all our brothers and sisters scattered throughout the world.

**Christ is Risen!
Indeed He is Risen!**

+Borys Gudziak

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Easter 2026