



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA  
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**Archepiscopal Encyclical on Great and Holy Pascha, 2024**

May 5, 2024

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ-loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

***You who fast, and you who fast not, rejoice today!  
The table is laden; let all fare sumptuously.***  
(Catechetical Oration of the Holy Chrysostom)<sup>i</sup>

My beloved sisters and brothers in the Risen Lord,

*Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη!* Christ is Risen!

On Pascha night, the gilded voice of the legendary Archbishop of Constantinople cries out in every church throughout the Orthodox Christian world. In this only sermon ever preached on this “first of Sabbaths” (*μία τῶν Σαββάτων*) and “feast of feasts” (*ἐορτῶν ἐορτή*), the Holy Chrysostom invites one and all to partake of “the banquet of faith” (*τὸ συμπόσιον τῆς πίστεως*).

His grand call to everyone to share in the joy of the Resurrection comes without price, like the call of the Prophet who said, *Let everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and those who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price* (Isaiah 55:1).<sup>ii</sup> For as we chant on this Holy Night, “let us all forgive all things in the Resurrection,”<sup>iii</sup> from the smallest to the greatest of failings, no price is exacted for the abundance of God’s grace, *even grace upon grace* (John 1:16).



Indeed, we may not have kept the Fast as we first intended. And some do not keep the Fast at all. However, our invitation to “the banquet of faith” isn’t simply contingent upon the quality or quantity of the foodstuffs from which we partake or abstain. Instead, our participation in the Table as co-banqueters presupposes a high measure of philanthropy and compassion for our fellow neighbor.

Thus, the saintly Golden-Mouth calls all to the Table, the Holy Table, without regard for our fulfillment of the laws around fasting. For on the night of Pascha, the law of love transcends every shortcoming — if only we will extend the same love and forgiveness that God grants to us to others.

My beloved Christians, do not pass by the invitation of Saint John Chrysostom! Accept it without pride in whatever you think you have attained, and without shame or regret for how you may have fallen short of your intentions. The Table is laden! Let all fare sumptuously of God’s eternal mercy and love!

*Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!*

+ELPIDOPHOROS  
Archbishop of America

Note: To be read in every parish of the Archdiocese during Agape Vespers on Pascha Sunday, May 5, 2024.

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<sup>i</sup>Greek: *Νηστεύσαντες και μη νηστεύσαντες, ευφράνθητε σήμερα. Ἡ τράπεζα γέμει, τρυφήσατε πάντες.* (ὁ Κατηχητικός Λόγος τοῦ Ἁγίου Χρυσοστόμου)

<sup>ii</sup>Greek: *οἱ διψῶντες πορεύεσθε ἐφ’ ὕδωρ και ὄσοι μη ἔχετε ἀργύριον βαδίσαντες ἀγοράσατε και πίετε ἀνευ ἀργυρίου και τιμῆς οἴνου και στέαρ.*

<sup>iii</sup>Greek: *Συγχωρήσωμεν πάντα τῇ Ἀναστάσει.*