

# RESURRECTION PASTORAL LETTER 2015

+ NATHANIEL

**By the Mercy of God and the Will of the People,  
Archbishop of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate  
of the Orthodox Church in America**

To our beloved clergy, monastics and pious faithful of our God-protected Episcopate, Grace, Mercy and Peace from God, and from us our fatherly love and hierarchal blessing.

*Yesterday, I was buried with you, O Christ. Today, I rise with you in your arising. Yesterday, I was crucified with you, O Savior; therefore, glorify me together with you in Your Kingdom.*

Dear Beloved:

Christ is risen!

On this great day of rejoicing, our hearts reflect on the goodness of God and the depths of his love for us. On this holiest of holy days, we are reminded of the continuous concern and the marvelous plan that the Creator has established for all mankind and forever.

What was created “good” was abused, and man and all nature suffered from the fall. The Spirit of God which hovered over the waters of creation did not abandon the handiwork done out of love but remained protective, guiding and restoring. Through prophets and holy, dedicated souls, the fact of God’s love and concern for man was kept alive. Through the mouths of men and angels, humanity was reminded of its dependence on the one, the only and true God.

In time, that love burst into flower by the presence of the King of kings, the Lord of lords, among us. He came as an infant, born from a woman, and lived the years of human existence among us and lighted an eternal flame, the true and only worthwhile light, by which man could find his singular way through the dark, unknown days of his earthly life.

This Jesus of Nazareth, true God of true God, is whom we celebrate today. Our songs are about victory over evil, the triumph of life over death, of truth over falsehood, of light over darkness, of hope over despair. Jesus is over all of these things. He is our “eternal,” our unending joy. How is it that to be understood? Jesus Christ is the answer to every question which rises in the depths of man’s troubled heart.

During his sojourn on earth, the Lord healed people of their many physical ailments; he raised the dead from the clutches of annihilation. Rejoicing in this, men drew closer to him and heard not only the words of healing of the body’s woes, but learned of reconciliation with God through the forgiveness of sin. This is what makes our hearts start and leap for joy: our sins are taken away, our transgressions erased!

When the followers of the Lord stood hidden from his crucified agony, while those who rejected his Sonship and ignored his voice scoffed, the power of the Almighty wiped away the sins of all mankind, and this forever, by the outpouring of blood and water which gushed from the side of the Lamb of God, Jesus, the Word of God.

His precious body was laid to rest, and stillness crept into the hearts of his followers. A silence covered the land, and hope stood at a threshold. But out of that quiet, the Lord appeared to Mary, to Peter, to John and the others and enkindled the spark of joy which spread like wildfire from mouth to mouth, from heart to heart, from troubled soul to troubled soul. "The Lord is risen, granting great mercy to our souls!"

This spark, the fire, the light which bursts forth on this day and is passed from person to person, lighting not just the candle of wax in our hand but the candle of the soul, is the only truth which has created civilization, inspired humanity, and overcome the devil.

There are those who wish to make Christianity one of many religions. Others struggle mightily, but vainly, to eradicate the message of hope and eternal life. By destroying the icons on the walls of the churches, they think they can silence the lips of God! Still others attempt to knead the uniqueness of Christianity into an all-embracing society based on the invention of men's minds and rituals to erase what they feel "divides" men, one from another.

What divides men is sin. Who would silence the Word of God is spiritually dead. Which man-made philosophy is not folly?

Dearly beloved:

Let us rush forth to meet Christ our Savior on this day and fall at his feet and embrace them. Let us say "Brother" to those who hate us. Let us kneel before our confessor and pour out our sins for the Lord to forgive. Let us make bold our hearts, for he is with us, and the powers of hell will not prevail.

Christ is risen, and the universe trembles! Christ is risen, and mankind weeps for joy! Christ is risen, and unending life is announced!

Let us not keep secret that which the Lord tells us to proclaim.

Let us not be judged for being lazy or indifferent.

Let us be glad in the power which has been given to us to herald the Good News: Christ is risen, and with him, all mankind!

Christ is risen! Truly, he is risen!

Accept our fatherly love and archpastoral blessings on those near and those far away.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+Nathaniel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative initial 'N'.

+NATHANIEL, Archbishop