

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith

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Marblehead, OH 43440

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***Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,
Diocese of the Midwest***

MAY 5, 2024

**GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA
RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD**

EPISTLE: Acts 1:1-8

In my first account, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus taught, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."



GOSPEL: John 1:1-17

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Tony Monastra, 2119 Willow Cove Marblehead, OH 43440; Patti Owens, 311 Woodbridge Road, Vermilion, OH 44089; Basil Glovinsky, 1007 Glendale Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452; Subdeacon Roger Pinta, P.O. Box 39, Middle Bass, OH 43446; Diane Tryon, 109 Joslyn Street, Arcadia, OH 44804; Ed & Irene Vangeloff, 454 Strouse Lane, Sandusky, OH 44870



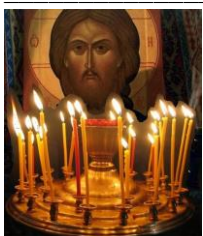
APRIL CANDLE SPONSORS

Altar Candles: Fr. Peter & Mat. Michelle, For Health and God's Blessings for Barbara Wroblewski, Matushka's mother and Michal Tomáš, Father's father (**\$50**); **Chandelier:** Valerie Schutt, Birthday blessings to Joe (**\$50**); **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Available (**\$25**); **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, Birthday blessings to Michael (**\$20**); **Candles at St. Tikhon Icon:** For Safety and Health of Nicholas, Tikhon, Gleice, & Chloe (**\$20**)



MAY REPOSED

Julia Onyock (1921) No date provided; Andrew Onyock (1922) No date provided; Christos Karniotis (1992) No date provided; **1-**Donald Cholcher (2020); **4-** Norman Anthony Glovinsky (2016); **8-** Brad Bauer (2019); **14-** Stanley Lis (2019); **15-**George Glovinsky (1986); **21-** Anna Mazurik (2008); **22-** Mary Opritza (2011); **24-** Helen Greshko (1980); **25-** Anna Mazurak (1966); **25-** Philip Timko (2021); **27-** John Gresko- (2008); **30-** Anna Elchisco (1977)



VIGILS FOR APRIL 28

Tamara & Mary Blackford 1 In loving memory of Rob Blackford, Jr.

Susan Guzy 1 Special intentions

Jean Hilleman 1 Special intentions

Laura Kovach 3 For health and/or healing of Matushka Michelle, Larry D., Patti O., Margi H., Fred S., Marty B., Jim K., Ron R., Diane T., Ruth S., James W., Tony M., Hannah S., Barbara D., Pauline O., Betty K., Ben F., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Sharon D., John D., Karen D., and Kathie J.
Birthday blessings and many years to Debby.
Special intentions

Sandy Martin 1 Special intentions

Diane Tryon 1 Special intentions

Natalie Twarek 8 For the health and recovery of Father Emilian, For the health and recovery of Ruth, Pam, Diane, Ron, Rita(Gigi), Jim, Ed, Michelle, Terrie, Theresa, Clayton, For the health of Randy, Patrick and Marty, Mike Heffernan and Barbara Heffernan, Health and healing for Father's dad Michal and Matushka's mom Barbara, For the health and recovery of Tony, Bev, Ed, Irene, Father David, Pauline, Judy, Tina, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Tina's dad, Earl, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Betty, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat, special intentions

PRAYER LIST

Parishioners & Family: Pam / Jim Twarek / Ed Garrity / Patti Owens / Tony Monastra / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Ruth Sheller / Basil Glovinsky / Dale / Sophie / Jeanne Smith / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Chris Hannon / Subdeacon Roger Pinta / Ed Vangeloff / Irene Vangeloff / Diane Tryon / Sonja Rose / Ron Royhab / James Bargdill / John Beadle / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Joseph Habegger / Elaine Hileman / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Earl Rindfleisch / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Stephanie Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Gleice, her unborn baby & Chloe / Carol / Debbie & Marco / Nora. **Other Requests:** Michael Heffernan / Susanne / Barbara Heffernan / Rita Mumea / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Sidharth Bijilani – friend of Subdeacon Roger and Debbie Pinta / Anthony / Archpriest David Lis / Bishop Matthias / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Ben Franklin / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / Mark Masica / Valerie Ritzenthaler / William / Rick Rowe / Chris. **Military:** Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military

READERS LIST



Sunday May 5 – Subdeacon Roger
Sunday May 12 – Joe
Sunday May 19 – Natalie
Sunday May 26 – Jake

ATTENDANCE



04/27 Pal Sunday Vespers, 10 attending; 04/28 Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy, 32 attending (7 guests); 04/29 Holy Monday Presanctified Liturgy, 16 attending; 05/01 Holy Wednesday Holy Unction, 24 attending (2 guests); 05/02 Holy Thursday Vespertal Divine Liturgy, 11 attending; Holy Thursday Passion Gospels 14 attending (3 guests)



MAY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

1 – Debby Pinta; **5** – Joe Schutt; **5** – Sebastian Stamp; **6** – Fred & Teri Cassell Anniversary; **8** – Laura Kovach; **16** – David & Sandy Martin Anniversary; **17** – Tony & Tina Monastra Anniversary; **20** – Joe & Valerie Schutt Anniversary; **26** – Quincy Kowal

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

MON. May 6		Bright Monday , Righteous Job the Long-Suffering; Acts 1:12-17, 21-26, Jn 1:18-28
	10:00 AM	DIVINE LITURGY
TUE. May 7		Bright Tuesday , Saint Alexis Toth, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America; Acts 2:14-21, Lk 24:12-35
	10:00 AM	DIVINE LITURGY
WED. May 8		Bright Wednesday , Holy Apostle, and Evangelist John the Theologian; Acts 2:22-36, Jn 1:35-51
THU. May 9		Bright Thursday ; Prophet Isaiah; Acts 2:38-43, Jn 3:1-15
FRI. May 10		Bright Friday , Apostle Simon the Zealot; Acts 3:1-8, Jn 2:12-22
SAT. May 11		Bright Saturday , Equals of the Apostles and Teachers of the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius; Acts 3:11-16, Jn 3:22-33
	4:00 PM	VESPERS
SUN. May 12		2nd SUNDAY AFTER PASCHA, THOMAS SUNDAY, Tone 1
	9:10 AM	HOURS
	9:30 AM	DIVINE LITURGY Followed by blessing of the graves at the cemetery



CHARITY OF THE MONTH

“Baby Bottles (Heartbeat of Port Clinton)” is the charity we donate to for the month of May.



COFFEE HOUR SPONSOR LIST

May 5	-	HOLY PASCHA – No Coffee Hour
May 12	-	No Coffee Hour – Blessing of the Graves at the cemetery

Signup sheet is located in the Social Hall.



SUNDAY OFFERING

Sunday, April 28, 2024

Tithe	\$ 830.00
Candles	\$ 33.00
Vigils	\$ 70.00
Donations	\$ 190.00
Holy Day Donation	\$ 280.00
Flowers Donations	\$ 260.00
Liturgical Item Donation	\$ 40.00
Chandelier	\$ 50.00
Bookstore	\$ 25.00
Total:	\$1,778.00

May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!



CLEANING SCHEDULE

May 6, Jean
May 13, Laura
May 20, Stephanie
May 27, Sandy

UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- May 12th** Antipascha, Thomas Sunday, Mother’s Day, Blessing of the graves at the cemetery
- May 19th** Sunday of the Holy Myrrhbearers
- May 25th** 1st Market Day of the Season
- May 26th** Sunday of the Paralytic



“Christ is Risen, my joy!”

St. Seraphim of Sarov



Христось воскресє!
Воїстину воскресє!
Christ is Risen!
Indeed, He is Risen!
Χριστός ανέστη!
Ἀληθῶς ανέστη!



*Angels in the Heavens, O Christ our Savior,
Praise Thy Resurrection with hymns.
Deem us also who are on earth,
Worthy to glorify Thee with a pure heart.*

O Death, where is your sting?
 O Hell, where is your victory?
 Christ is risen, and you are overthrown.
 Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen.
 Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice.
 Christ is risen, and life reigns.
 Christ is risen, and not one dead remains
 in the grave.
The Paschal Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

Dear beloved family, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ,

Happy and blessed Pascha to you and your families. We wish you a beautiful day filled with mercy and abundant blessings of Jesus Christ, the One who is Risen from the dead, who has trampled down death and bestowed life upon us all!

Happy and blessed Pascha 2024!

With abundant love in the Risen Christ,

Fr. Peter and Mka. Michelle

*Holy Assumption OCA
Marblehead, Ohio*



2024 DONATIONS FOR PASCHAL FLOWERS, INCENSE AND WINE

The following is the list of sponsors who made donations in Memory/Good Health of their loved ones

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------|--|
| Dennis Bird – | Flowers - | In loving memory of Marguerite Bird |
| Susan Guzy – | Wish List - | In loving memory of Felenchak, Gulla, Guzy and Szolora family members
For the health of all members of Holy Assumption parish, their families and friends |
| Jean Hileman – | Flowers - | For the health of Elaine Hileman
In loving memory of departed Hileman & Pipenur families
For the health and blessings received for our children and grandchildren, Justin, Jessica, Hayden, Rowen, |

Silas, James, Lauren, William, Maxwell, Tommy, Joey and Colleen

- Laura Kovach – Flowers - In loving memory of departed family members of the Kovach, Mazur and Polansky families
For the health of our family and friends
- Sandy & Dave Martin – Flowers - In loving memory of Mom, Dad, Butch, Marg, Joe and Ruth and all departed family and friends
- Athanasios Paullas – Flowers - In loving memory of Mary Paullas
- Ron & Roberta Royhab – Palms For the health of the Royhab and Libb family members
- Stamp family – Wish List - For the health of Larisa, Arcadie, Lefterii,
- Natalie Twarek – Flowers - In loving memory of our parents and family members
Paschal blessings and good health to all of our family and friends
- Fr. Peter and Mat. Michelle – Flowers - For the health of Barbara Wroblewski.
For the health of Michal & Helena Tomas.
In loving memory of all deceased of the Tomas & Drozd families
In loving memory of all deceased of the Wroblewski & Dube families

We would like to thank the following parishioners for their donations for wine and incense

- Angela Bricker – incense Special Intentions
- Joe & Valerie Schutt wine
- Fr. Peter & Mat. Michelle – incense

May Our Lord and God reward you all for your generosity and grant you His Special blessing throughout this Paschal Season!



HOLY PASCHA: The Resurrection of Our Lord

Commemorated on May 5

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith; receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness.

(Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom, read at Paschal Matins)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the center of the Christian faith. Saint Paul says that if Christ is not raised from the dead, then our preaching and faith are in vain (I Cor. 15:14). Indeed, without the resurrection there would be no

Christian preaching or faith. The disciples of Christ would have remained the broken and hopeless band which the Gospel of John describes as being in hiding behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. They went nowhere and preached nothing until they met the risen Christ, the doors being shut (John 20: 19). Then they touched the wounds of the nails and the spear; they ate and drank with Him. The resurrection

became the basis of everything they said and did (Acts 2-4): “. . . for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39).

The resurrection reveals Jesus of Nazareth as not only the expected Messiah of Israel, but as the King and Lord of a new Jerusalem: a new heaven and a new earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . the holy city, new Jerusalem. And I heard a great voice from the throne saying “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. . . He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:1-4).

In His death and resurrection, Christ defeats the last enemy, death, and thereby fulfills the mandate of His Father to subject all things under His feet (I Cor. 15:24-26).

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing (Rev. 5: 12)

THE FEAST OF FEASTS

The Christian faith is celebrated in the liturgy of the Church. True celebration is always a living participation. It is not a mere attendance at services. It is communion in the power of the event being celebrated. It is God’s free gift of joy given to spiritual men as a reward for their self-denial. It is the fulfillment of spiritual and physical effort and preparation. The resurrection of Christ, being the center of the Christian faith, is the basis of the Church’s liturgical life and the true model for all celebration. This is the chosen and holy day, first of sabbaths, king and lord of days, the feast of feasts, holy day of holy days. On this day we bless Christ forevermore (Irmos 8, Paschal Canon).

PREPARATION

Twelve weeks of preparation precede the “feast of feasts.” A long journey which includes five pre-lenten Sundays, six weeks of Great Lent and finally Holy Week is made. The journey moves from the self-willed exile of the prodigal son to the grace-filled entrance into the new Jerusalem, coming down as a bride beautifully adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2) Repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and study are the means by which this long journey is made.

Focusing on the veneration of the Cross at its midpoint, the Lenten voyage itself reveals that the joy of the resurrection is achieved only through the Cross. “Through the cross joy has come into all the world,” we sing in one paschal hymn. And in the paschal troparion, we repeat again and again that Christ has trampled down death—by death! Saint Paul writes that the name of Jesus is exalted above every name because He first emptied Himself, taking on the lowly form of a servant and being obedient even to death on the Cross (Phil. 2:5-11). The road to the celebration of the resurrection is the self-emptying crucifixion of Lent. Pascha is the Passover from death to life.

Yesterday I was buried with Thee, O Christ.

Today I arise with Thee in Thy resurrection.

Yesterday I was crucified with Thee:

Glorify me with Thee, O Savior, in Thy kingdom (Ode 3, Paschal Canon).

THE PROCESSION

The divine services of the night of Pascha commence near midnight of Holy Saturday. At the Ninth Ode of the Canon of Nocturn, the priest, already vested in his brightest robes, removes the Holy Shroud from the tomb and carries it to the altar table, where it remains until the leave-taking of Pascha. The faithful stand in darkness. Then, one by one, they light their candles from the candle held by the priest and form a great procession out of the church. Choir, servers, priest and people, led by the bearers of

the cross, banners, icons and Gospel book, circle the church. The bells are rung incessantly and the angelic hymn of the resurrection is chanted.

The procession comes to a stop before the principal doors of the church. Before the closed doors the priest and the people sing the troparion of Pascha, "Christ is risen from the dead...", many times. Even before entering the church the priest and people exchange the paschal greeting: "Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!" This segment of the paschal services is extremely important. It preserves in the expense of the Church the primitive accounts of the resurrection of Christ as recorded in the Gospels. The angel rolled away the stone from the tomb not to let a biologically revived but physically entrapped Christ walk out, but to reveal that "He is not here; for He has risen, as He said" (Matt. 28:6).

In the paschal canon we sing:

Thou didst arise, O Christ, and yet the tomb remained sealed, as at Thy birth the Virgin's womb remained unharmed; and Thou has opened for us the gates of paradise (Ode 6).

Finally, the procession of light and song in the darkness of night, and the thunderous proclamation that, indeed, Christ is risen, fulfill the words of the Evangelist John: "The light shines in darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

The doors are opened and the faithful re-enter. The church is bathed in light and adorned with flowers.

It is the heavenly bride and the symbol of the empty tomb:
Bearing life and more fruitful than paradise
Brighter than any royal chamber,
Thy tomb, O Christ, is the fountain of our resurrection (Paschal Hours).

MATINS

Matins commences immediately. The risen Christ is glorified in the singing of the beautiful canon of Saint John of Damascus. The paschal greeting is repeatedly exchanged. Near the end of Matins the paschal verses are sung. They relate the entire narrative of the Lord's resurrection. They conclude with the words calling us to actualize among each other the forgiveness freely given to all by God:

This is the day of resurrection.
Let us be illumined by the feast.
Let us embrace each other.
Let us call "brothers" even those who hate us,
And forgive all by the resurrection. . .

The sermon of Saint John Chrysostom is then read by the celebrant. The sermon was originally composed as a baptismal instruction. It is retained by the Church in the paschal services because everything about the night of Pascha recalls the Sacrament of Baptism: the language and general terminology of the liturgical texts, the specific hymns, the vestment color, the use of candles and the great procession itself. Now the sermon invites us to a great reaffirmation of our baptism: to union with Christ in the receiving of Holy Communion.

If any man is devout and loves God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. . . the table is fully laden; feast you all sumptuously. . . the calf is fatted, let no one go hungry away. . .

THE DIVINE LITURGY

The sermon announces the imminent beginning of the Divine Liturgy. The altar table is fully laden with the divine food: the Body and Blood of the risen and glorified Christ. No one is to go away hungry. The service books are very specific in saying that only he who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ eats the true Pascha. The Divine Liturgy, therefore, normally follows immediately after paschal Matins.

Foods from which the faithful have been asked to abstain during the lenten journey are blessed and eaten only after the Divine Liturgy.

THE DAY WITHOUT EVENING

Pascha is the inauguration of a new age. It reveals the mystery of the eighth day. It is our taste, in this age, of the new and unending day of the Kingdom of God. Something of this new and unending day is conveyed to us in the length of the paschal services, in the repetition of the paschal order for all the services of Bright Week, and in the special paschal features retained in the services for the forty days until Ascension. Forty days are, as it were, treated as one day. Together they comprise the symbol of the new time in which the Church lives and toward which she ever draws the faithful, from one degree of glory to another.

O Christ, great and most holy Pascha.

O Wisdom, Word and Power of God, grant that we may more perfectly partake of Thee in the never-ending day of Thy kingdom

(Ninth Ode, Paschal Canon).

The V. Rev. Paul Lazor

New York, 1977



The Paschal Artos

“Artos” is a Greek term for (“leavened loaf”) refers to a loaf of leavened bread that is blessed during services in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

A large Artos is baked especially for use at Pascha. After the Prayer behind the Ambo, a single large loaf of bread, the Artos, is brought to the priest. Depicted on the top of the Artos is either the symbol of Christ’s victory over death—the Cross, surmounted by a crown of thorns—or the Resurrection of Christ.

The Artos symbolizes the physical presence of the resurrected Christ among the disciples. The priest blesses the Artos, while it is on the altar, with a special prayer and sprinkles it with Holy Water. The Artos is then placed on a small table before the Iconostasis where it remains throughout Bright Week.

It is customary, whenever the faithful enter the Temple, for them to kiss the Artos as a way of greeting the Risen Christ. The significance of the Artos is that it serves to remind all Christians of the events connected with the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. While still living on earth, the Lord called Himself the Bread of Life, saying: I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and He who believes in Me shall never thirst (John 6:35).

After His Resurrection, more than once Jesus appeared to His disciples, ate before them, and blessed their own food. For example, as evening fell on the first day of His Resurrection, He was recognized in Emmaus by two of His disciples as He blessed and broke bread.

On the 40th day after His Resurrection, the Lord ascended into heaven, and His disciples and followers found comfort in their memories of the Lord: they recalled His every word, His every step and His every action.

When they met for common prayer, they would partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, remembering the Last Supper. When they sat down to an ordinary meal, they would leave a place at the head of the table empty for the invisibly present Lord and would lay bread on that place.

Remembering this custom of the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church made it their custom to put out the Artos at the Paschal Feast in memory of the appearances of the Risen Lord to His disciples, and also in memory of the fact that the Lord Who suffered and was resurrected for our justification has made Himself the true Bread of Life and is invisibly present in His church always, to the close of the age.

On Bright Saturday, after the Divine Liturgy, the priest says another prayer over the Artos and it is then broken and distributed among the whole congregation at the Divine Liturgy the priest says another prayer over the Artos and it is then broken and distributed among the whole congregation at the Divine Liturgy on Thomas Sunday.



ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF
THE MOST REVEREND DANIEL
ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO AND THE MIDWEST
ON THE BRIGHT AND JOYOUS FEAST OF PASCHA – 5 MAY 2024

Beloved Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the God-protected Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

In the darkness of the night between Holy Saturday and Pascha, our diocesan communities, joined by family, friends, and guests, will perform an ancient ritual as we process around our temples in imitation of the faithful Myrrhbearing Women. In the darkness of night, they made their way to the Lord's tomb. They had just witnessed the horrible events of the past week in which their Lord and Master had been betrayed, unjustly accused, brutally beaten and crucified, and whose sacred body was then placed in a borrowed tomb.

As they began their journey to the tomb, the morning was yet to dawn and the darkness of the night still covered them, as if to accentuate the darkness of their profound grief and sorrow. Indeed, their tears of the past days still flow freely; they were filled with grief, overwhelmed by everything that they had witnessed. Their grief is intensified by their fear and worry. What will they encounter when they come to the tomb? Will the soldiers standing guard harass or arrest them? Will the religious authorities be there to mock and deride them? They are also concerned about how they will roll the massive stone away from the tomb so that they may enter in order to give their Lord a proper burial. Their steps are made slower by the heavy sacks of spices and the jars of myrrh and oil that they carry with them. And they say among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" (Mark 16:3).

As these ever-faithful women disciples walked the path to the tomb, their hearts were grieved and their minds troubled by the additional challenge of the heavy tombstone. In that moment, the stone was, for them, the symbol and the reality of the end of Jesus' life and mission. He was buried, locked in darkness behind a huge stone—and so were their hopes. The One who came into the world to save sinners and had proclaimed mercy and love for all peoples, had met with no mercy. He who relieved sinners of the burden of their sin and condemnation, had been condemned to bear the weight of the cross. Their Lord and Master, who had freed the woman caught in adultery from the horrific death by stoning, now lay behind that great stone, His body constrained in a shroud. The weight of that stone, an overwhelming obstacle, weighed heavily upon the hearts of these faithful women. Not only did it block access to the body of their Master, it also represented the end of their dreams and hopes, the future life promised them by their Master. However, their grief and their worries were lifted from them as they completed their journey of mercy and service and arrived at the tomb, for "...they looked up, and they saw that the stone had been rolled away, for it was very large" (Mark 16:4).

My dear Daughters and Sons, sometimes we find ourselves heavily burdened and feel the same weight upon our hearts that was felt by the Holy Women Disciples. Sometimes, the weight of life's burdens stifles our lives and extinguishes our hope. Sometimes, we are weighed down by fears and regrets, as well as our own pridefulness and stubbornness. All of us encounter the weight and burden of the tombstones which rob us of enthusiasm and energy and the fulness of life. We experience this in the

loss of our loved ones and friends, in the daily fears and failures that hold us back from accomplishing the good we hope to do, from our own sense of inability or unworthiness. We encounter this burden in the weight of self-absorption that deadens our desire to express genuine hope and love. When we experience these and so many other types of difficulty and challenge in life, like the women at the tomb, we ask ourselves “who will roll the stone away from the tomb?”

In those early morning hours, the Holy Myrrhbearers, carrying that heavy weight in their hearts in the darkest moment of their lives, taught us an amazing lesson, for *when they saw that the stone had been moved away*, they entered the tomb. “And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you” (Mark 16:5-7).

In that moment, they realized that the darkness which had enshrouded them had now turned into light. They learned that death had destroyed death and restored life. Just as they had during the Lord’s public ministry, they now witnessed the revelation of God’s mighty power, the triumph of light over darkness and of life over death. They had wondered: *Who will roll the stone away?* And they learned that it is the Lord God who rolled away that stone forever. Even now, as we gather to celebrate the Lord’s victory over sin and death, He lifts the stones that burden our hearts so that hope may be born within us once again. Therefore, like the holy women, let us also “look up” to Him.

Beloved Ones, Our Lord Jesus Christ is our Passover, our Pascha. He is the One who transforms the darkness of the world into light and raises us up from the darkness of sin and death and lifts us with Himself into the radiance of His Kingdom. As we celebrate this Pascha let us raise our eyes, “looking unto Jesus, the ¹author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2). Let us fix our eyes on the Risen Lord, the One who brings us from darkness into light, from death to life. Let us set our gaze upon the God of Life- then no weight will burden us, no stone will hold back the joy of life in Christ, no tomb will enclose us within the arms of despair. Let us lift our eyes to the Risen Savior and ask that the power of His victorious resurrection may roll away any of the stones that hold us down or keep us back. Let us lift our eyes to Him, the Lord and Giver of Life, and let us press forward with the assurance that the eternal life which He won for us is already present among us.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, I extend my loving and heartfelt greetings on this bright and glorious feast. May all of us, unburdened by sin and sorrow, rejoice in the Light and Life which has been given to us by the Crucified and Risen Savior. Be assured of my prayers for you and all your loved ones as we celebrate the joy of this great Day of Victory as well as throughout the coming Forty Days.

With love in the Risen Lord,

+DANIEL

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest