



Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Missionary Parish, Orange County, California

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

April – June 2012

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THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH TO HER SPIRITUAL CHILDREN AT PASCHA, 2012

IRINEJ

By the grace of God

Orthodox Archbishop of Pec, Metropolitan of Belgrade-Karlovci and Serbian Patriarch, with the all the Hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church – to all the clergy, monastics, and all the sons and daughters of our Holy Church: grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, with the joyous Paschal greeting:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

*"This is the day which the Lord made;
Let us rejoice, and be glad in it!"*

The Resurrection of Christ our Savior is, dear brothers and sisters and all our spiritual children throughout the inhabited world, "The Feast of Feasts, the celebration above all celebrations" – the Miracle above all miracles and the Gift above all gifts, which All-Mighty God, in His immeasurable mercy and love, has given to mankind. In this Gift are found all gifts; in this Blessing are found all blessings – as here on earth, so also in heaven (cf. Ephesians 1:3).

The world has been enlightened with the light of God's truth, and mankind has been filled with great joy as the greatest treasure sent to us from above by God's Providence.



That which the prophets of old and Godly inspired people prophesied thousands of years ago and communicated to the chosen people of God has taken place openly, magnificently and gloriously in the presence of a multitude of eyewitnesses (cf. I Cor. 15:4-8).

"Arise, O Lord, judge the earth!" (Psalm 82:8) – the prophet of God has written; and we, so many centuries later, sing that very same song knowing that it really has to do with Christ's Resurrection.

The Resurrection affirms that man is created for eternity, for immortality, and not for ephemeral life.

The Holy Apostles, having seen His empty tomb, witnessed with their lives to that which they had heard, seen and touched with their hands (cf. I John 1:1), joyously and courageously proclaiming Christ's Resurrection to the people in Jerusalem and Palestine (cf. Acts 4:20). They, with the Myrrhbearing Women,

were the first heralds of the news that the Savior of the world, by His sacrifice on Golgotha and His glorious resurrection, has opened the door of God's Kingdom to mankind "in which mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Psalm 85:11).

Christ's Resurrection is not a joy given of this world. The source of that joy is God's goodness and love; and it carries the seal of eternity. That joy's existence and endurance is not dependent upon on the will and power of people, but rather on the almighty will and power of God. That is why the Savior has told His disciples that no one can take it away from them (cf. John 16:22).

By His glorious resurrection the Savior has given us life eternal (cf. Rom. 6:23), and the joy of eternal life, because "Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (I Cor. 15:20) – joy, because the sacrifice for our salvation has been offered on the Cross, and we are called to freedom (cf. Gal. 5:13); joy, because we have been cleansed from the ancestral curse by the Most Pure Blood of the Savior (cf. I John 1:7); joy, because through the Resurrected Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit, we enter "into the joy of our Master" (Matthew 25:21).

With Christ's Resurrection the saving mystery of mankind's redemption from sin and death has been accomplished. This new Pascha of the Lord reveals the truth that we have passed from death to life (cf. John 5:24); and that Christ remains with us in all the days until the end of the world (cf. Matthew 28:20).

When we know that the Lord is with us and in us, we must turn to Him, confess to Him our sorrow and trials. He will comfort us, strengthen us and lead us through this earthly life. Let us safeguard this gift of God within us and ever be watchful, dear spiritual children, so as not to offend our Lord with any sins.

Out of love for Him, let us not allow sins to blemish us. When attacked by the enemy, like the Apostle Peter let us cry out: "Lord, save me!" (Matthew 14:30).

Understandably, in life we will experience many trials, injustices and sadness. But know that the Lord, so long as we are with Him, turns the greatest sadness into joy, because He said to His disciples and Apostles: "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

The God-Man Himself has experienced much sadness, tribulation and suffering. On Great and Holy Friday the greatest and the most fearsome dual in the entire historical struggle between good and evil took place, the battle between truth and untruth, between life and death.

The most mysterious question asked by every man, which a few thousand years earlier was asked by the Righteous Job, is: "If a man dies, shall he live again"? (Job 14:14) Before this eternal question the greatest minds of the world bow their heads in silence. But we Christians know the meaning of our life, and have our hope – and our hope is in the Resurrected Lord. "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in Me, even if he dies, yet shall he live." – said the Savior of the world (John 11:25)

It is written somewhere that man begins to die the very day that he is born. But he also begins to resurrect to eternal life when he receives Christ as his Savior and Lord, that is, when he begins to live life according to Christ.

So that we may live according to the Gospel, dear brothers and sisters, it is necessary to arm ourselves with the whole armor of God, to put on the breastplate of righteousness (cf. Ephesians 6:13-14); but above all things to put on love, which is the bond of perfection (cf. Colossians 3:14).

"This I command to you" – said the sweet Christ – "that you love one another" (John 15:17); "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another", (John 13:35); "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13); "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love" (John 15:9).

This is the kind of commandment Christ has given us. No other law-giver, no other worldly wise man, could have brought more perfect and more salutary law: clear, simple, beneficial and all useful. This law is the basis for life, for where there is no love, hate, evil, vice, chaos, jealousy, malice, revenge, and the annihilation of life rule.

This law of Christ is attainable by all: learned and unlearned, rich and poor, healthy and sick, powerful and weak, genius and uneducated, old and young.

By His glorious Resurrection the Savior at the same time has revealed the steadfastness and life-creating nature of His Holy Church on earth, in which the Holy Spirit lives and works. She is a living organism of God and our Savior, Who personally manifests Himself in the Holy Liturgy through the sacred Mystery of Holy Communion, because the Holy Spirit guides and leads the Church, and not the spirit of this world.

All of us who are baptized and enlightened by the Spirit of Truth have become the members of Christ's Church. Therefore, all of us through the power of the faith given to us by God can say: "I can do all things through Christ who

strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13), always asking: what kind of member of Christ’s Church am I? Am I obedient to my Church which teaches me and my children towards goodness, chastity, holiness and nobleness?

By His resurrection Christ unites our loved ones, both living and those departed in the Orthodox faith, with us. With Him we know and feel that they are with us and we are with them connected with the unbreakable bonds of God’s eternal love.

This great day, this holy day, this the day of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, through its meaning, its message and its teaching obligates all of us to safeguard and rightfully confess our Orthodox faith. Above all, it obligates us to safeguard human dignity, in everyone, and in ourselves. For the Son of God took upon Himself the sins of the entire world, suffered and resurrected, to make all people children of God (cf. Ephesians 1:5).

This Feast Day requires that we live our life in full awareness of our responsibility. The duties that we are to accomplish – whether in the home, or field, or in a factory in front of a machine, as educators and teachers, as clergy and preachers of Truth, as statesmen and leaders of this nation, must be done properly and responsibly. Always in the name of God Who has indebted us to redeem the time of our life with love and sacrifice, while being watchful that no one is brought to tears or becomes sorrowful because of us. Thanks to the Resurrected Lord, every innocently shed tear of man is saved in the bosom of the God-Man.

Therefore, dear spiritual children, lovingly safeguard the mystery of life established and sanctified by God Himself. Do this for our tranquility and the reputation of our nation, for our children – our biggest treasure, for whom you live and work. Of course, do this without leaving out true faithfulness and mutual forgiveness.

Respect and safeguard the sanctity of Christian marriage, because it is the foundation of an uplifted, healthy and upright family. Abortion, the greatest crime of this age, is spreading throughout our nation as a plague. It is awful to even imagine that half of million unborn babies every year are deprived of life, and thus have never seen the light of the world. Husbands, have in mind the words of the Lord: “You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment”. (Matthew 5:21)

On this great day of joy and life we greet our mothers, who with their love, day and night watchfully guard the cribs of their children. We greet the sick, despised, humiliated and imprisoned; we greet all the laborers and workers, travelers and those who intend well; teachers and students; we greet founders and donors, builders and benefactors. We pray with faith and hope for all those persecuted and driven from their homesteads, that the Lord may wipe away their every tear (cf. Revelation 7:17). We offer our unceasing prayers to our Resurrected Christ for our brothers and sisters in Kosovo and Metohija. We ask them to never give up in spirit and to remain faithful to their Orthodox faith on their and our ancestral homestead.

Presenting to you, dear brothers and sisters, the meaning of the Holy Resurrection of Christ for all mankind, in fraternal love, we ask you to carefully and soberly discern the events and times in which we live. Let us discern good from evil, the temporary from the eternal, the permanent from the transient.

We pray to our Resurrected Lord that we may experience His Resurrection as our own resurrection and as deliverance from every kind of spiritual and moral illness and temptation!

May the luminous rays of Christ’s Resurrection illumine all of you in our Homeland, those of you living abroad and all people of good will.

“Do not be afraid, for I have overcome the world. I am the resurrection and the life, everyone who believes in Me, even if he dies, shall live”, the Resurrected Lord tells us so that we may know. **Christ is Risen! Indeed He Is Risen!**



СРПСКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЦРКВА СВОЈОЈ ДУХОВНОЈ ДЕЦИ
О ВАСКРСУ 2012. ГОДИНЕ

ИРИНЕЈ

О милости Божијој православни Архиепископ пећки, митрополит београдско-карловачки и Патријарх српски, са свим архијерејима Српске православне цркве – свештенству, монаштву и свима синовима и кћерима наше свете Цркве: благодат, милост и мир од Бога Оца, и Господа нашега Исуса Христа, и Духа Светога, уз радосни васкрсњи поздрав вечне истине, наде и љубави:

ХРИСТОС ВАСКРСЕ!

*Ово је дан који створи Господ,
обрадујмо се и узвеселимо се у њему! (Пс 117,24)*

Васкрсење Христа и Спаситеља нашег је, браћо и сестре и сва наша духовна децо широм васељене, „Празник над празницима, и Славље над слављима“ – Чудо над свим чудима и Дар над свим даровима, који је Свемогући Бог, у Својој неизмерној милости и љубави, даровао роду људском. У овом Дару се налазе сви дарови; у овом Благослову сви благослови – како овде на земљи, тако и на небесима (ср. Еф 1,3).

Васељена је озарена лучом светлости Божје истине, а човечанство је испуњено великом радошћу, као највећим благом коју нам са неба шаље Божје Провиђење.

Оно што су древни пророци и Богом надахнути људи пре много хиљада година пророковали, и изабраном народу Божјем саопштили, догодило се јавно, величанствено и славно пред лицем многобројних сведока и очевидаца (ср. 1. Кор 15,4–8).

„Васкрсни, Господе, суди земљи!“ (Пс 82,8) – записао је Пророк Божји; а ми, ево после толико векова, певамо ту исту песму, знајући да се она управо односи на Христово Васкрсење.

Васкрсење потврђује да је човек створен за вечност, за бесмртност, а не за пролазност.

Свети Апостоли, видевши Његов празан гроб, посведочили су својим животом оно што су чули, видели и рукама својим опипали (ср. 1. Јн 1,1), радосно и неустрашиво објављујући Христово Васкрсење људима Јерусалима и Палестине (ср. Дап 4,20). И они су, са Женама Мироносицама, били први весници да је Спаситељ света, Својом голготском жртвом и Својим славним васкрсењем, отворио роду људском врата Царства Божјег „у којем се милост и истина среташе, а правда и мир пољубише“ (Пс 85,11).

Васкрсење Христово није радост дата од овога света. Извор те радости је у доброти и љубави Божјој; и она носи печат вечности. Њено постојање и њено трајање не зависи од воље и власти људи, већ од свемогуће воље и силе Божје. Стога је Спаситељ и рекао ученицима Својим да ову радост нико неће узети од њих (ср. Јн 16,22).

Својим славним васкрсењем Спаситељ нам је даровао живот вечни (ср. Рим 6,23) и радост вечнога живота, јер је „Христос устао из мртвих, те постаде првенац оних који су умрли“ (1. Кор 15,20) – радост, јер је жртва за наше спасење принета на Крсту, и ми смо на слободу позвани (ср. Гал 5,13); радост, јер смо Пречистом Крвљу Спаситеља нашег очишћени од прародитељског греха (ср. 1. Јн 1,7); радост, јер кроз Васкрслог Христа улазимо, руковођени Духом Светим, „у радост Господара својега“ (Мт 25,21).

Васкрсењем Христовим извршила се тајна искупљења рода људског од греха и смрти. Ова нова Пасха Господња открива нам истину да смо прешли из смрти у живот (ср. Јн 5,24); и да Христос остаје са нама у све дане до свршетка века (ср. Мт 28,20).

Кад знамо да је Господ са нама и у нама, треба Њему и да се обратимо, Њему своју тугу и муку да исповедимо. Он ће нас утешити, ојачати и кроз овоземаљски живот водити. Чувајмо тај Божји дар у себи и пазимо, децо наша духовна, да Господа не увредимо каквим грехом.

Из љубави према Њему, не допустимо да нас упрљају наши греси. Кад нас непријатељ нападне, попут Апостола Петра, завапимо: „Господе, спаси ме!“ (Мт 14,30).

Разуме се, у животу ћемо доживети многе невоље, неправде и жалости. Али знајмо да Господ – уколико смо са Њим – и највећу жалост претвара у радост, јер је рекао Својим ученицима и Апостолима: „У свету ћете имати жалост; али не бојте се, Ја сам победио свет“ (Јн 16,33).

Богочовек је и сâм за живота доживео много жалости, патњи и страдања. На Велики петак десио се највећи и најстрашнији обрачун у свеопштој историјској борби између добра и зла, између истине и неистине, између живота и смрти.

Најтајанственије питање које поставља сваки човек, а које је још пре неколико хиљада година поставио Праведни Јов, гласи: „Кад умре човек, хоће ли оживети?“ (Јов 14,14). Пред овим вечним питањем и највећи умови света сагињу главе и ћуте. А ми Хришћани знамо смисао нашег живота, и имамо нашу наду – а наша нада је у Васкрслом Господу. „Ја сам васкрсење и живот; који верује у Мене ако и умре живеће“ – рекао је Спаситељ света (Јн 11,25).

Негде је записано да човек почиње да умире истог дана када се и роди. Али почиње да истога дана васкрсава за живот вечни када прима Христа као свога Спаситеља и Господа, то јест, када почне живети животом по Христу.

Да бисмо јеванђелски живели, драга браћо и сестре, потребно је да се наоружамо свеоружјем Божјим, да се обучемо у оклоп правде (ср. Еф 6,13–14); а поврх свега тога, да се обучемо у љубав, која је свеза савршенства (ср. Кол 3,14).

„Ово вам заповедам“ – каже Благословен Христос – „да љубите једни друге“ (Јн 15,17); „По томе ће сви познати да сте Моји ученици ако будете имали љубав међу собом“ (Јн 13,35); „Од ове љубави нико нема веће, да ко живот свој положи за пријатеље своје“ (Јн. 15,13); „Како што Отац љуби Мене, и Ја љубим вас; останите у љубави Мојој“ (Јн. 15,9).

Ето какву нам је заповест оставио Христос. Ни један законодавац, ни један мудрац овога света, није могао измислити савршенији и благотворнији закон: јасан, једноставан, користан и свуда применљив. Овај закон је основ живота, тамо где нема љубави влада мржња, зло, порок, грех, хаос, завист, злоба, освета, уништење живота.

Овај Христов закон је свакоме достижан: ученом и неученом, богатом и сиромашном, здравом и болесном, силном и немоћном, генију и неписменом, старом и младом.

Својим славним Васкрсењем Спаситељ је, у исто време, открио и непоклебивост и животворност Своје Свете Цркве на земљи, у којој живи и дела Дух Свети. Она је живи организам Бога и Спаса нашега, Који се лично пројављује у Светој Литургији кроз Свету тајну Причешћа, јер Црквом управља и руководи Дух Свети, а не дух овога света.

Сви ми крштени и просвећени Духом Истине постали смо чланови Цркве Христове.

Зато, сваки од нас силом вере дане нам од Бога, може да каже: „Све могу у Христу, Који ми моћ даје“ (Фил. 4,13), непрестано питајући: какав сам ја члан Цркве Христове? Да ли сам послушан својој Цркви која ме учи добру, честитости, светости и племенитости; учи и мене и децу моју?





Својим Васкрсењем Христос сједињује с нама наше миле и драге, живе и преминуле у Православној вери. Њиме знамо и осећамо да су они са нама и ми са њима спојени нераскидивим везама у вечној љубави Божјој.

Овај велики дан, свети дан, дан Васкрсења Господа нашега Исуса Христа, својим значењем, својом поруком и поуком обавезује све нас да своју веру православну чувамо и правилно је исповедамо. Обавезује нас да изнад свега – у сваком човеку, и у себи самима – чувамо људско достојанство. Јер је Син Божји узео на Себе грехе свега света, пострадао и васкрсао, да би све људе учинио синовима Божјим (ср. Еф 1,5).

Овај Празник нам налаже да свој живот проводимо у пуном осећању одговорности. Дужности које обављамо – било да смо у дому, у пољу, у фабрици за машином, као учитељи и васпитачи, као свештенослужитељи и проповедници Истине, као државници и челници овога народа, да их обављамо ваљано и одговорно. Увек у име Бога Који нас је задужио да љубављу и жртвом искупљујемо време свога живота, при том чувајући се да нико због нас не заплаче и не буде жалостан. Благодарјеи Васкрслом Господу, свака невино проливена суза човечја сачувана је у недрима Богочовека.

Стога, децо наша духовна, чувајте у љубави тајну живота коју је установио и осветио Сám Бог. Ово ради благостања и угледа нашега, ради наше деце – највећег блага, због којих живите и радите. Искрена верност и узајамно праштање да не изостане.

Поштујте и чувајте светињу хришћанскога брака, јер је она основ узвишене, здраве и честите породице. Чедоморство, највећи злочин овога века, као куга се шири у нашем народу. Страшно је и помислити да пола милиона нерођене деце сваке године бива лишено живота, не угледавши светлост света. Супружници, имајте на уму речи Господње: „Не убиј; јер ко убије, биће крив суду“ (Мт 5,21).

Поздрављамо наше мајке, које љубављу даноноћно бдију над колевкама своје деце, на овај велики дан радости и живота. Поздрављамо болесне, презрене, понижене и утамничене; поздрављамо све трудољубиве и раднике, путнике и намернике; учитеље и оне који се уче; поздрављамо ктиторе и приложнике, неимаре и задужбинаре. За прогнане и изгнане са својих огњишта са вером и надом молимо се, да Бог обрише сваку сузу са лица њихових (ср. Отк 7,17). Непрестано се молимо Васкрслом Христу за нашу браћу и сестре на Косову и Метохији. Молимо их да никада не клону духом и да остану верни својој Православној вери на свом и нашем прадедовском огњишту.

Износећи пред вас, драга браћо и сестре, значај Светог Васкрсења Христовог за васцело човечанство, у очинској љубави, молимо вас да здраво и трезвено пазите на догађаје и време у коме живимо. Разликујмо добро од зла, привремено од вечног, непропадљиво од пропадљивог.

Молимо се Васкрслом Господу да Његово Васкрсење доживимо као своје сопствено васкрсење и избављење од духовних и моралних болести и искушења сваке врсте!

Нека све вас у Отаџбини, вас у расејању као и све људе добре воље, обасјају светли зраци Христовог Васкрсења.

„Не бојте се, Ја сам победио свет. Ја сам васкрсење и живот, и сваки који вјерује у Мене, ако и умре, живјеће“, сведочи нама за наук Васкрсли Господ. **ХРИСТОС ВАСКРСЕ! ВАИСТИНУ ВАСКРСЕ!**

Дано у Патријаршији српској у Београду, о Васкрсу 2012.



Пасха 2012
Христос Васкрсе!
Драга браћо и сестре,

Поново нас Христос благосиља прославом Његовог Светог Васкрсења. Поново завршавамо циклус поста и молитвене усредсређености на духовне, хришћанске вредности, које нам је Господ даровао и обнављамо себе и свет око себе. Поново обзнањујемо своју неизмерну радост васцелом хришћанском свету.

Не заборавимо ни часа и имајмо на уму и негујмо у души свест о томе, да Христово Свето Васкрсење превазилази све, затамљује све неправде и обасјава свакога од нас својом Божанском милошћу. Христово Васкрсење означило је ново схватање живота, понудило веру и наду у нови живот. Због дара обновљења све је постало јасно и разумљиво. Упркос свему нејасном и погрешном у свету, Св. Васкрсењем све је постало јасно и добро у Христу. Стога је потребно да стално растемо у вери да бисмо то схватили и разумели.

Св. Апостол Павле у посланици Коринћанима каже: “Јер сад видимо као у огледалу, у загонетки, а онда ћемо лицем у лице; сад знам делимично, а онда ћу познати као што бих познат.” (1. Кор. 13:12) У овом стиху Св. Апостол Павле говори да нисмо разумели, иако смо гледали и још увек гледамо као у огледалу, у

Pascha 2012
Dear Brothers and Sisters:
Christ is Risen!

Once again Christ has blessed us with the celebration of His Holy Resurrection. Once again we proclaim this great joy to the world. Once again we complete the cycle and renew ourselves and the world.

Let us never forget to keep this before us, that Christ's Holy Pascha overcomes all things, overshadows all wrongs, and overwhelms each of us with His divine mercy. Christ's true gift to this world and to all of us is His gift of renewed life. It is because of this gift of renewal that all things are understood. Despite all that may be wrong with the world, it is all made right with Christ. We just have to constantly strive to grow in our Faith and seek to understand this greatest of all gifts.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.” (1 Cor. 13:12) In that passage the Apostle Paul lets us know that before we did not understand, we just saw dimly that which could be right and good and holy. But with Christ, we now understand; we now can put everything in perspective; we now can see what we are all meant to be and become. This is the great lesson of the Resurrection and the great redemption of the world.

сенци, шта је исправно, добро и свето. Али са Васкрслим Христом све добија пунозначни смисао, можемо да видимо чему смо посвећени и шта можемо да постанемо у Христу. Ово је велика лекција Васкрсења и велико искуљење света.

Свесни смо тога да смо неретко збуњени, конфузни, цинични, очајни, малодушни; а то је грех, јер треба да знамо шта је права радост. Не радост овога света која увек доноси тугу, већ радост у другом свету, у вечности. То је оно што нам даје потпуну радост јер је то радост једине истинске радости Господа и Бога нашега. Наравно, овај свет доноси муку јер га не гледамо кроз праву призму, већ га гледамо кроз сенку. Али кад га гледамо кроз пуну светлост Христову, све се види јасно јер Он обасјава и просвећује све (као што се каже у Пређеосвећеној Литургији.)

Постоји једна прича о чувеном свештенику који је плакао за време Литургије. Кад су га питали зашто плаче одговорио је: “Кроз Литургију видим како би све требало да буде и колико далеко морамо још да идемо.”

Драга браћо и сестре, сагледајмо јасно праве вредности и истински смисао нашег живота и са радошћу прославимо Најсветији дан од свих светих дана. Господе, дај да јасно видимо лепоту, доброту и светост обасјану Светим Васкрсењем Твојим. Да сагледамо јасно да мрачне силе више немају силе ни власти јер је Христос Васкрсао! Његова васкрсна светлост је та која предводи све нас.

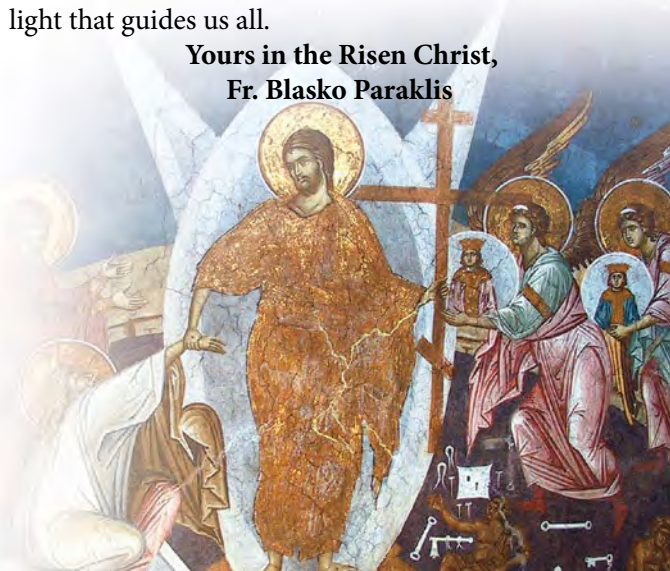
Желећи вам свима срећне светле празнике Светог Васкрсења Христовог поздрављам вас са најрадоснијим поздравом,

Христос Васкрсе!
Ваш у Васкрсом Господу,
О. Блашко Параклис

So often we become confused, cynical, despondent when we look around us. Yet that is a sin because we should know what true joy is. Not the joy of this world which will always bring sadness but joy in the world to come. This is what gives us the ultimate joy because it is joy in the only joy--God Himself. So, of course, this world brings such passions because it is not seen in the right prism.. It is rather seen “dimly”. But when seen in the full light of Christ, all is seen clearly as He illumines all (as is said in the Presanctified Liturgy.)

There is a story about a famous priest who wept during a Liturgy. When asked why he wept, he simply replied “Now I can see how it should be and how far we have to go.” My dear brothers and sisters, let us see clearly what it should and can be in our lives and celebrate this “Holy Day of Holy Days.” May we see clearly the beauty, the goodness and the holiness that is illuminated by Christ’s Holy Resurrection. May we see clearly that no dark powers have dominion because Christ is Risen! This is the light that guides us all.

Yours in the Risen Christ,
Fr. Blasko Paraklis



EASTER GIFT

NAME / IN NAME OF: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY / STATE: _____ ZIP _____

Easter Donation \$ _____

Make your check payable to: Most Holy Theotokos Church

Please Mail to: 2148 Michelson Drive
Irvine, CA 92612

THANK YOU

Schedule of Services

The Divine Liturgy is served regularly at 10:00 am every Sunday and on major Feast days at our Parish Center at Irvine Corporate Park, 2148 Michelson Drive, Irvine.

10:00 am: *Divine Liturgy*

11:30 am: *Sunday School*

12:00 pm: *Lunch & Adult Bible Study*

Vespers service followed by the Sacrament of Holy Confession will be served every Saturday at 5:00 pm and on the eve of major Feast days at 7:00 pm.

Akathist Service to the Mother of God is served on Fridays at 7:00 pm.

ЛИТУРГИЈА ПРЕЂЕОСВЕЋЕНИХ ДАРОВА PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY

During Great Lent, Presanctified Divine Liturgy is served each Wednesday at 5:00 am, and each Friday at 10:00am.

April 7th BLAGOVESTI - THE ANNUNCIATION: Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at 10:00am.

April 7th - LAZARUS SATURDAY: Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am: The gospel clearly relates how six days before Christ's own death, He raised his friend Lazarus from the dead (John 11:42). We see the humanity and divinity of Christ combined as well as the foreshadowing of his own death.

April 7th - LAZARUS SATURDAY VESPERS - VRBICA at 5:00 pm: I ask all of the parents to bring children. PLEASE ARRIVE NO LATER THAN 4:45 pm to receive vrbica/palms and zvoniceon this great Feast of Christ's entry into the city of Jerusalem.

THE SERVICES OF HOLY WEEK

Since the early days of the Church, there has been a cycle of services celebrated during Holy Week and Pascha.

Evidence of this goes all the way back to Egeria, a female from the West who experienced Orthodox Holy Week and Pascha in 383 AD in Jerusalem. She stated that the tradition was already long established.

These exact same services are still conducted today by the Orthodox Church. Here is a brief outline of the services of Holy Week. Many of the services are anticipated or served the day before.

April 8th - CVETI ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM: Divine Liturgy at 10:00am: This liturgy heralds the end of the Great Fast and the beginning of Holy Week as Christ triumphantly enters into Jerusalem. The tradition, as the tropar states and the icon shows, is for a procession of palms led by the children. So begins our journey into Holy Week. During Holy Week, we fast from meat, poultry, dairy products, eggs, fish, wine and oil.

April 8th - Bridegroom Matins at 1:00 pm: Known in the Church as The End, the imagery here is about the Last Judgment. It relates the deep anguish of Christ as He prepares for His Passion. The services tell us to be ever vigilant for we do not know when God will come. These services are a triumph of the eschatological (last days) imagery in the Church.

April 9th - Велики Понедељак - Great and Holy Monday Presanctified Liturgy at 5:00 am: The readings from Exodus during these services tell of the Passover which precedes the Passover (Pascha) of Christ.

April 9th - Bridegroom Matins at 7:00 pm.

April 10th - Велики Уторак - Great and Holy Tuesday Presanctified Liturgy at 5:00 am

April 10th - Bridegroom Matins at 7:00 pm

April 11th - Велика Среда - Great and Holy Wednesday Presanctified Liturgy at 10:00 am

April 11th - Велика Среда - Great and Holy Wednesday Holy Unction at 7pm, at St. Steven Serbian Orthodox Cathedral at 1621 West Garvey Ave., in Alhambra. For Holy Unction there should be more priests serving, therefore, all of us Serbian priests gather together at the Cathedral to perform this Holy Sacrament for all the Faithful. This service relates to the event when the harlot anoints Christ and is forgiven. On this day we customarily anoint the people with Holy Oil as a sign of healing and remission of sins.

April 12th - Велики Четвртак - Great and Holy Thursday: Holy Vespers Liturgy of Holy Thursday at 9:30 am: This solemn Liturgy commemorates the First Eucharist also known as Red Thursday. The darkness of the week is broken slightly because of the importance of the Eucharistic event. Traditionally the priest prepares the reserve sacrament of the year. The passion of Christ is now close.

April 12st - Велики Четвртак - Great and Holy Thursday Matins of Holy Friday Thursday evening at 7:00 pm. The service, commonly known as „The Twelve Gospels“ as the Church, remembers the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ by reading the twelve Gospel accounts. A climatic point of Holy Week emphasizing the reality of actions.

April 13nd - Велики Петак - Great and Holy Friday Royal Hours at 10:00 am: Known as Royal because there is a Gospel reading and the Emperor would attend this service. It recounts the entire Gospel and Passion of Jesus Christ.

April 13th - Велики Петак - Great and Holy Friday Vespers at 5:00 pm: Remembering the crucifixion and death of Christ. There is a solemn procession as the burial shroud (plashtanica) is brought out to the people. Christ is laid in the tomb and our vigil of the Resurrection begins.

SCHEDULES OF EVENTS (continued)

April 13th - Велики Петак - **Great and Holy Friday** Matins of Holy Saturday on Friday evening at 7:00 pm: Known as the Praises of the Lamentations, the service begins the Sabbath as Christ lays in rest in the tomb. Often seen as a funeral service for Christ, in fact it is a commemoration of the law and love of God towards His people.

April 14th - Велика Субота - **Great and Holy Saturday** Vespertine Liturgy of Holy Saturday at 10:00 am: The death of Christ is linked with the creative acts of God. It is here that Christ descends into Hell and breaks the doors. The service inaugurates the paschal celebration as the service is bright and uplifting. The tomb is revealed as a place of life.

April 15th - Велика Субота - Вакрсно јутрење - **Great and Holy Saturday: The Services of the Great and Holy Pascha** Saturday evening starting at 11:45 pm: The Joy of Joys, Holiday of Holidays, celebrating Christ's Resurrection. The service begins with nocturn anticipating the Resurrection. The procession follows at midnight announcing the Resurrection to the world. We then celebrate the Paschal matins. **Baskets will be blessed after Ruserrecional Matins on Pascha night and again following Divine Liturgy on Sunday.**

April 16th - „**БАКРСЕЊЕ ХРИСТОВО**“ - **PASCHA CELEBRATION**, Divine Liturgy at 10:00am at Parish Center, 2148 Michelson Dr., Irvine. This is the Great and Joyous Liturgy celebrating the Pascha of our Lord. The Parish celebrates the Resurrection with a feast and events for the children and adults. Banquet will be held after the Divine Liturgy. See the detailed information later in this Newsletter. Serbian Music and entertainment will be provided.

April 25th - Вакрсни понедељак и уторак - Bright Week (on Tuesday -no Liturgy here - there will be Liturgy @ the Mon-

astery in Escondido) and on Monday, April 16th, the Divine Liturgy will be held at 10:00 am.

May 6th - Ђурђевдан - **St. George the Victorious Great Martyr** - Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

May 12th - Св. Василије Острошки - **St. Basil of Ostrog-Wonderworker** Divine Liturgy at 9:00 am.

May 22nd - Transfer of the Relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker Divine Liturgy at 5:00 am

May 24th - Св. Кирило и Методије - **Sts. Cyril and Methodius**: Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

May 24th - Vaznesenje Gospodnje - **SPASOVDAN ASCENSION of our Lord Jesus Christ** Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

June 3rd - **Holy Constantine and Helen** - Divine Liturgy at 10:00am.

June 2nd - Задушнице - **Memorial Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am**: Please bring the names of your deceased members of the Family.

June 3rd - Silazak Sv. Duha na Apostole - **SVETA TROJICA - DUHOVI - Pentecost Sunday HOLY TRINITY DAY- PENTECOST** Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

June 4th - Духовски понедељак - **Pentecost Monday** Divine Liturgy at 5:00 am.

June 5th - Духовски уторак - **Pentecost Tuesday** Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am.

THE APOSTLES FAST Just a reminder that the fast leading up to the Feast of Apostles Peter and Paul begins June 11th. It, of course, ends on the Feast Day of Sts. Peter and Paul, July 12th

June 28th - Св. Великомученик Лазар и св. Мученици српски - Видовдан - **St. Lazarus** The Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:00 am.

Summary of Annual Parish Meeting

Sunday, February 12th, 2012

The annual parish assembly was held on Sunday, February 12, 2011. After the opening prayer and selection of the presidium, outgoing president David Williams gave his report. In addition to summarizing both the achievements and challenges of the parish, he mentioned that the main goal for 2012 is to spread the Orthodox Faith and to purchase property where the parish can establish a permanent home.

The financial report, given by Smilja Kaiser, revealed that the parish still needs more financial stewards. Last year thank to some bigger donations the Parish met its budget and made some profit. Extensive discussion followed that included both questions about stewardship and suggestions for improving the parish's finances. Alexandar Zlatić volunteered to chair the stewardship Program.

Father Blasko gave the IOCC report and announced Robert Negron and Anica Jandric will replace Uros Seferovic as the parish representative on the Orange County IOCC committee. Father appealed to the Faithful to actively participate in IOCC events.

During the Sunday School report, Sanja Rakonjac stressed the importance of bringing children to Liturgy weekly and said she intends to get the children involved in philanthropic work. Gabriela Simich Sunday School teacher will train a team to participate in the Orange County Bible Bowl.

Choir director, GorjanaZekic, thanked the choir members for singing responses during Liturgy and gave a glowing report about the choir's outstanding performances in several.

Next, DusankaRadisavljevic wrote the report on the status of the Vera Gajic estate. Although she, Father Blasko and volunteers spearheaded at least seven full days of sales preceded by hundreds of hours of sorting and pricing items, there is yet an abundance of furnishings left in the home. An art/antique dealer in San Juan Capistrano took all of the major items on consignment as it is no longer viable for the parish to continue sales. Some smaller insignificant items are being sold at Garage Sale mainly on Saturdays.

Father Blasko's report focused on the need for more consistent attendance at Liturgy and a greater commitment to stewardship. He and the Board sent a letter to all major Land owners developers in OC to inquire about the possibility of acquiring the land for the Church. He intends to vigorously research possible sites where the parish can build a church and cultural center. Parish priest full report is included here.

Following Father's report, the 2012 parish board members were selected.

Report of the Parish priest

We began last year like previous years—with great joy: joy for the growth and stability of our beloved parish; joy for our brotherhood in Christ's Holy Church. As such we should manifest that joy by asking for His blessings each year. Last year we felt God's blessings in many ways.

First, we here at the Most Holy Theotokos Church kept a strong and faithful liturgical cycle. It is something that was established when we moved to this facility a few years ago and which continues today. We keep this cycle so that all of us can encounter the Living God through our common prayer life. And in our participation in this prayer life, we transcend our own life and share in a life with Christ. Our common prayer life must be central in all that we do as a parish.

Strength we receive from our common prayer life enabled us to accomplish a few important projects last year. The first and most important project was the building and consecration of an iconostasis. We all know how much the iconostasis beautifies our church, but we, as Orthodox Christians, know Icons are not merely decorations though beauty is an established part of the church. And while there is a great tradition of cultural and artistic achievements in the church, icons are so much more. They are visual prayers; they are theology in color; they are our Faith depicted for all to share. They uplift the spirit and give us a precious treasure that "God is with us." It is hard to imagine an Orthodox Church where there is no iconography, no beauty, no way for us to interact with our Faith. This project is just a foretaste, a small picture, of the permanent church we will build.

The consecration of our iconostasis made our Church Slava, which we celebrate annually, very special. We were given this day by our Bishop when the parish was named after the Mother of God. Thus, by bearing her name, we place ourselves under her protection. This ensures that everything we do has not only a protector but an intercessor before God. And we, in turn, should honor the Mother of God by our work.

Orthodox Tradition places everything we do under heavenly protection. Every church is named so as to have a model to follow. That is why every day we commemorate a saint (or group of saints) and dedicate that day to them. All of this is to sanctify every action and present a powerful witness of the mercy and love of God. We offer our bodies, our presence even our time to God so that our whole life becomes one of prayer and sacrifice. That is why it is so important to remember these days. To remember our own patron saint is to have a model to follow in each individual life and in the life of the family as a whole. To remember the patron saint of the parish is to remember the work that has been done and the work that yet needs to be done in the parish.

One of the important works accomplished last year was a lecture by Fr. Meletios Webber entitled Addicts and Addictions: An Orthodox Perspective. This presentation was offered primarily to educate our children and our youth. We live in a very dangerous and challenging world. The young souls are the first targets. There is nothing more important, nothing more vital, nothing more crucial than bringing our children and youth to church in order to educate them through our Sunday School and Bible Study classes and most especially through the Divine Liturgy and other services.

Our goal must be to educate ourselves and our children so we can constantly grow in our Faith. It is not that difficult. All we need is commitment: commitment that the parents will bring the children to church; commitment that we will enforce what they learn in the home; and commitment that we will educate ourselves so that we can better pass on our Faith to the children. Most importantly, we need to love our children. St. John Chrysostom says, "Nothing so furthers teaching as this: Loving and being loved."

Help us in any way you can and support the parish in this work. Through our children, we will secure the future of our church.

Concerning the future of our church, together with the board we initiated a very important project last year. We sent letters to the major land owners in OC introducing ourselves, our intentions and our plans. This resulted in establishing some important contacts with the Irvine Company which responded to our letter. The Irvine Company, which owns most of the land in OC, is not willing to sell unless it gets its desired price. The broker with whom I have been working has some contacts in the Irvine Company, and we are both keeping in touch with them. Another important contact was with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange and the Mormon Church both of which have land in Orange County as well. I am expecting to meet with representatives soon to discuss our needs.

I see this as a decisive year in achieving our goal to acquire a permanent location. In order to do that, each one of us has to do the maximum in every possible way. Both regular church attendance and dedicated stewardship are most crucial for the life of our parish.

Let us be true members of Christ's Body by participating actively in His Holy Church. Participation in the life of the church separates a bystander from a member. A bystander simply looks in on the activity while a member becomes involved. A bystander is either afraid or unwilling to take the risks while a member places his or her whole life before God. We must make the decision -- bystanders or members.

It is easy to stand on the fringes and gaze into what the church is doing. It does not require effort or sacrifice. One just gets involved on a very elementary level. However, membership requires effort, commitment and sacrifice. Through effort, commitment and sacrifice come greater blessings than any single one of us can imagine. Think of the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and the many people who passed on the other side of the road, away from the man who had fallen victim to thieves. Only one person got involved and took care of the victim, and in return he received many blessings. We can be the people who pass by "on the other side" or we can be the ones who are involved. Certainly it is easier to pass by, but the *true* Christian is involved.

We here at the Most Holy Theotokos Church have many opportunities to be involved and to make a commitment. There are the wonderful liturgical services, the Sunday School classes and activities, the edifying talks, and the ability to commit to the church through the proper stewardship of our time, talent and treasure. I recently emailed all of you a letter concerning the stewardship. I expect all of us to become true stewards of God's Church. We must be involved. A liturgy cannot be conducted without people; the teachings cannot be taught without the class; and the activities do not come about on their own. They require all of us to be involved. And the blessings from being involved are beyond count.

Be a part of Most Holy Theotokos Church not apart from her.

It has been my great joy and honor to serve you as your priest, and I want to thank everyone without exception from the bottom of my heart for all your efforts and support during this year. My special thanks go to all members of our devout Church Board and President David Williams for all the help and leadership they have provided not only this past year but for a number of years so far. Special gratitude goes to Jovana Jerinic for doing the bookkeeping last year. My deepest gratitude goes to Sanja Rakonjac who continues to be the cornerstone of this parish together with her children. She and Ivan John Ous are here not only on Sundays but on every feast day and at every service throughout the week. I extend my deepest gratitude as well to Gorjana Zekic, the choir director, who, through her expertise and dedication, placed our church's choral music at the highest level. I am eternally grateful to our Sunday School teachers, most especially Gabriela Simich. I thank Ljiljana Moris and all the ladies and families who prepared food for Sunday lunches and for all of our special events. Last but not least, my sincere thanks go to our good Marko Rakonjac, Stefan Covic, Marko and Nikola Zlatic, Alex Romashuck and Stefan and Luka Paraklis, who help me serve liturgy weekly by assisting me at the Holy Altar. Above all, let us continuously thank the Lord God and the Most Holy Mother of God, the protector of our holy parish. I am eternally grateful to Marie Wilkie who donated iconostasis to our church.

Once again, I kindly ask you to assist where you can and make this church your home because it is your home, your church.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Blasko Paraklis

STEWARDSHIP APPEAL

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I am pleased to share some very good news with you. I'm sure you will rejoice as well when I tell you that our parish has a broker who is trying hard to assist us in selecting and acquiring land where we can establish our permanent church and cultural center.

More than ever, we need you to become involved and to participate in *every* aspect of parish life. Only in this way can we convince possible major donors and loan officers that we are willing and able to build and support a religious and cultural center. Even more importantly, only by making your commitment to Orthodoxy part of every aspect of your life can you reach the salvation for which we all strive.

Please join me and your fellow parishioners in a unified effort to realize our goals and establish our Faith permanently in Orange County. The unity we so direly need is expressed in many ways; regular church attendance, and consistent stewardship are among the most vital. After striving so tenaciously for so many years, surely we cannot allow this opportunity to escape us simply because of inadequate financial support.

I humbly urge you to become a steward and demonstrate your commitment by pledging the specific amount you are willing to donate on a regular basis. A stewardship form is attached to this letter. If you prefer, you can go to our website and complete the form online, www.mostholytheotokos.com *It is imperative for the parish to have a fully defined, consistent income in order to complete the business transactions that will allow us to realize our goals.*

You are, of course, welcome to call me if you have any questions, [949 830-5480](tel:9498305480)

In Christ,
Father BlaskoParaklis

2012 Stewardship Pledge Form

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

I COMMIT MYSELF TO CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH THOUGH THIS PLEDGE.

TOTAL PLEDGE FOR 2012: \$ _____

To be paid: _____ weekly _____ monthly _____ quarterly _____ in full

SIGNED _____ DATE _____

50th ST. SAVA MISSION *golden jubilee*

July 6-8, 2012

*Join Hundreds of Serbs
& celebrate!*

St. Sava Mission's 50th Golden Jubilee

July 6-8, 2012 – Jackson, California

Enjoy a Celebration Weekend of Food, Fun & Festivities!

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Fantastic Serbian Food & Live Music All Day & Night!

Enjoy Kolo Dancing & The Outdoor Kafana!

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Make Your Travel & Room Reservations Early!

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Connect to Local Hotels & Learn More About Our Big Event!

www.StSavaMissionFoundation.org

Phone / Fax: 209.230.9537

1962-2012

ST SAVA MISSION
Jackson, California

živeli!

CHILDREN'S SUMMER CAMP

July 15th through August 5th 2012

Summer camp is a unique opportunity for our children to learn about our Orthodox faith and culture as well as to meet other children from within our diocese. Every summer our Diocese organizes summer camp at St. Sava Camp in Jackson where many children from parishes within our diocese attend.

► **New this year, the individual registration form will be filled out exclusively online. You will still have to print and mail your Health, Insurance, Consent and Policy forms by mail. Also new this year, all forms are to be sent to Jackson at P. O. Box 965, Jackson, CA95642. Go to www.CampStSava.org to begin the registration process.** Adult volunteers are needed to work in the kitchen, or as counselors, etc.

► **Also, this year approximately 25 full scholarships available** for new campers during weeks one and two. The scholarships are available to families that can not afford to send their child to camp, i.e., low income, single parent, unemployed. The Camp staff are relying on the clergy to recommend campers for these scholarships. **All recommendations must be made by June 15, 2012.** These scholarships will be made available on a first come, first served basis. If you plan to send your child or if you can volunteer, please contact Fr. Blasko as soon as possible.

FOOD COLLECTION PROJECT FOR HOMELESS AT OUR PARISH

Our Parish has sponsored an independent homeless project every Sunday. We collect any food, fresh or canned, which we ask you place on the table located

next to the playroom. We gather all your donations along with the left-overs from our parish meals and the change from the collection box on the same table, and donate it all to the Salvation Army Shelter located in our neighborhood. We urge you to leave food each week on that table. If you would like to help deliver it to the shelter, please tell Fr. Blasko, or Sanja Rakonjac. It is such a great help. Big thank-you's to volunteers for delivering our donations. Check your fridge and cupboards before coming to Church on Sundays and bring whatever you can donate.

HELP YOUR PARISH THROUGH CAR DONATION

You can now help the parish by making a tax-exempt donation of a car, truck, RV, or boat. All DMV details will be handled for you, and your vehicle will be towed for free. The church will receive funds equaling the full value of the vehicle. Please call with any questions. Also, if you have any ideas or suggestions for fundraising activities to benefit our parish, please pass them along to David Williams or Fr. Blasko.

ENDOWMENT FUND

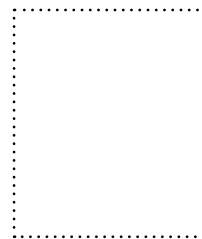
Another way to help our parish is to establish an endowment fund in memory of deceased members of your family. While the principal will always stay in tact, the income from the fund is used for various church needs and programs, as the donor may designate. The main thing is that the parish will pray regularly for the donor and his/her family members.



Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Missionary Parish

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