



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΙΚΑΓΟΥ

To the Clergy, the Monastic Communities, and the blessed faithful of the Holy Metropolis of Chicago.

Beloved fathers and brethren, Beloved children in the Lord,

Four short months ago, our parishes—indeed, the entire world—celebrated the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. On that day we raised our voices, joining the Angelic hosts and declared: *Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace goodwill among all people*. Tonight, on the sacred day of Pascha, we gather once again to proclaim:

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

On Christmas Day, we experienced the incarnation—the birth—of Love. During Holy Week, we experience the profoundness of divine Love. Love was betrayed, arrested, abandoned, slandered, and imprisoned. Love gave its back to whips, its cheeks to blows, did not turn away its face from the shame of spitting, stood before the judgment seat of Pilate, and endured the Cross. And as Love was placed in a tomb for three days, some believed they discovered its limits.

Certainly, death pierced the hands and feet of Love; but it could not bind them. Tonight, we are reminded that although death is a force in the world, *Love endures all things. Love never fails* (1 Cor. 13: 8). Love is Risen from the dead!

My dear friends, it is my heartfelt prayer that the exchange of the Paschal greeting will serve as a more meaningful way of expressing love for each other. When we declare: “Christ is Risen!” we are essentially saying: “I love you.” The Light of Pascha encourages us to love others as Christ loves us and to lay down our lives for others as Christ does for us.

Go, therefore, and reveal to people the joy of Christian discipleship, sharing with them the Love of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them through your expression of love that God is with them always, to the very end of the age. Amen.

Expressing to you my enduring love, I remain

In the Risen Lord,

† NATHANAEL
Metropolitan of Chicago