

**PASTORAL LETTER FOR THE FEAST OF THE LORD'S
RESURRECTION 2025**

† NICOLAE

by the grace of God

***Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States of America and
Metropolitan of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas***

*To the Beloved Clergy and Orthodox Christians of our holy Archdiocese,
peace and unwavering hope from Christ the Risen Lord,
and from us hierarchical blessings.*

*“We celebrate the very death of Death and the overthrow of Hell, and the beginning
of another life which is eternal. Let us sing in joy to the Author of these marvels: the only
blessed and most glorious God of our Fathers!” (Resurrection Canon, Ode 7)*

**Most Reverend Fathers, Beloved Faithful,
Christ is risen!**

We thank the Lord that He has enabled us to again utter these words which proclaim to all the Resurrection of Christ, the miracle that has changed the destiny of mankind and of the world, the miracle that must be declared, for it is the announcement of the victory of life over death, of the end of the reign of darkness and the beginning of the Kingdom of the light of the Risen Christ.

This miracle is proclaimed by the angel of the Lord to the myrrh-bearing women who had come to anoint the body of their Teacher, laid in the grave in great haste on Friday afternoon, before the beginning of the Jewish Passover: *I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him’.*¹ An unheard of thing, totally beyond understanding, that a dead person laid in a tomb would rise/*wake up from the dead*, in other words, would be resurrected. The angel sends the myrrh-bearers to announce the miracle to the Apostles. Thus these women, devoted disciples of Christ, become the first preachers/witnesses of the Lord’s Resurrection.

The 7th Ode of the Resurrection Canon speaks to us about this proclamation, enumerating **the blessings given to us together with the Lord’s Resurrection**. The first is *the death of Death* and refers to us Christians, who declare *the victory of life over death* not only as a historical event that took place 2000 years ago, but as those who, through baptism, are delivered from death. St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite speaks to us of this reality: “because we live in the Risen Christ, death has been put to death, it has become inert and impotent and no longer works in mankind its murderous and death-giving death. Therefore, we should ignore death, and trampling on its tyranny, should proclaim together with the Prophet Hosea that

¹ Matthew 28: 5-7

song of victory: *death, where is your sting*² and together with the Apostle Paul: *death has been swallowed up by victory*³.⁴ This is why we **celebrate** the death of death, we experience the spiritual reality of our being freed from its power through the Resurrection of Christ.

The 7th Ode continues the enumeration: *we celebrate... the overthrow of Hell*. On Great and Holy Saturday Christ descended with his soul full of divinity into hell, as we confess at every Divine Liturgy: “in the tomb with the body, and **in hell with the soul** as God, in paradise with the thief, and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit were you, O boundless Christ, filling all things.” The descent of divinity into hell meant the *overthrow*, the destruction of hell which had held in captivity the righteous souls imprisoned there since the sin of Adam. The icon of the *Lord’s Resurrection* reveals precisely this reality of the liberation of the souls held in hell, beginning with the protoparents Adam and Eve, pulled out by the liberating hands of Christ God. St. Nicodemus comments: “therefore we who believe in Christ and keep His commandments, after death will not go to hell, as the righteous of old, but our souls will go to the heavenly and radiant abodes, rejoicing with a partial delighting as we wait to receive the fullness of delight at the resurrection from the dead. Let us again say with Hosea: *I will deliver this people from the power of the grave*⁵, and then let us cry with the three youths: *he has brought us out of hell and from the hand of death has he saved us*⁶.⁷”

Then the Ode continues: *we celebrate... the beginning of another life which is eternal*. *The death of death and the overthrow of hell* are opportunities for us to take up again the road to perfection, toward regaining *the likeness* of God, the purpose of the creation of Adam. The Lord’s Resurrection is thus the beginning of *another life, eternal life*; it is the re-creation of man and the re-offering of the chance of attaining eternity. St. Nicodemus says: we also celebrate today the beginning of *another life, eternal life*, which **remains and never ends**, which is an exalted gift and a benefaction greater than the other two... for it gives us such a joy and a life filled with all good things, making this life to be without end and eternal, thus it is truly the gift of gifts, the goodness of all goodness and the benefaction of benefactions. Thus, the Lord has said regarding this: *I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly*.⁸ What is the meaning of this *abundance*? It means the eternity of this life full of all blessings.⁹”

The 7th Ode closes with that which it is appropriate for every Christian who has received this gift to do: *Let us sing in joy to the Author of these marvels: the only blessed and most glorious God of our Fathers!*” In our gratitude for these gifts it is right that we should include praise offered to God: He is the *Creator*, He is the *Governor*, the One who protected and guided our fathers, He is the *Savior* who completes the work begun on the first day of Creation.

² Hosea 13:14

³ 1 Cor. 15:54

⁴ Sfântul Nicodim Aghioritul, *Eortodromion sau tâlcuire la Canoanele Sărbătorilor împărătești*, Editura Sfântul Nectarie, 2024, vol. 2, p. 197.

⁵ Hosea 13:14.

⁶ Sfântul Nicodim Aghioritul, op. cit., p. 198.

⁷ Cântarea celor 3 tineri, 65.

⁸ John 10:10.

⁹ Sfântul Nicodim Aghioritul, op. cit., p. 198.

Most Reverend Fathers, Beloved Faithful,

Proclaiming during these days the Lord's Resurrection, it is right that we should focus our understanding on these *blessings* revealed to us in the *Canon* of Resurrection morning. Let us live as those who are freed from death and the bonds of hell, as those who live already, through Baptism, *another life, eternal life*. Our world continues to be troubled by violence and war, by conflicts between peoples. In this world, the Christian **should not be agitated like the world**, but one who brings peace and understanding, for he *lives already, in the Church, eternity*. For *the world passes away with its lusts, but the one who does the will of God remains forever*.¹⁰

In this year of the Centennial of the Romanian Patriarchate let us be thankful to the Risen Lord for all the blessings poured out upon the *Orthodox Romanian people everywhere*, upon the Romanian Orthodox Church, let us be grateful to our forebears who fulfilled this project of our People and of the Church. And together with all the children of our Church, whether Romanians or those who have become children of our Metropolia through spiritual adoption, **let us share**, with peaceful face and heart full of joy, **the hope of our resurrection with Christ!**

I embrace you in Christ the Risen Lord and I wish you health and a joyful Feast!

Truly He is risen!

Your brother in prayer to God,
† **Metropolitan NICOLAE**

Chicago, the Feast of the Lord's Resurrection, 2025

¹⁰ 1 John 2:17