



By the Grace of God
METROPOLITAN ZACHARIAH MAR NICHOLOVOS

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March 31, 2023

Blessings to our Very Reverend Chor Episcopoi, Reverend Fathers, Reverend Deacons, and faithful of the Northeast American Diocese!

Dearly beloved,

As far as humanity has known, it has always been interested in the idea of ‘happiness.’ There is an innate desire for human beings to be ‘happy.’ The great philosophers contemplated and spoke of it in great detail in their searches for the meaning of life. As Christians, happiness is something temporary, while the *joy* we receive from Christ is for life eternal. The esteemed Orthodox theologian Fr. Thomas Hopko once wrote, “Christian joy is not earthly happiness, pleasure or fun. It is the “joy in believing” (Rom 15:13). It is the joy of knowing the freedom of truth in the love of God (cf. St. John 8:32).”

For us, our joy comes not from anything of this world or even from ourselves, but from the hope we receive from the resurrection of Christ our God. The Apostle Peter speaks on this in his epistle:

“By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:3).

In Christ’s resurrection, we are now born to something new. Our entire understanding of hope and joy has been redefined by the Passion of the Lord. Our joy is not something that can be obtained through any means of this world, but only through communion with the risen Lord who reveals to us the “freedom of truth in the love of God” through His Holy Church.

As we celebrate the Life-Giving and Glorious Resurrection of Christ our God, let us all strive to define the joy in our lives through the eternal promise that we receive through the hope of Christ’s destruction of death. May this joy not be shaken by the struggles and tribulations of this world, but rather strengthened in knowing that Christ has overcome all.

We extend to you the unfading joy of our Lord on the Feast of His Glorious Resurrection. We pray that the joy of Christ’s Resurrection will bring gladness to each of you, so we may all be filled with the praise, glory, and honor of the revelation of Christ’s defeat over death.

Yours in our Lord,

Metropolitan Zachariah Mar Nicholovos