

The Most Reverend
Metropolitan PHILIP

The Right Reverend
BASIL



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of All North
America

Bishop of Wichita and the
Diocese of Mid-America

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
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P A S C H A 2 0 0 8

Beloved and Christ-loving Clergy, Monastics and Laity of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America:

I embrace and greet you with a holy kiss in the Name of the Resurrected Theanthropos Jesus Christ, and, together with you and Orthodox Christians throughout the world, I joyfully proclaim that Christ is risen! *Χριστός ἀνέστη!* *المسيح قام!* *Χριστος Βοσκερε!* *Hristos a înviat!* *Cristo ha resucitado!*

On this radiant Feast of feasts I share with you, my dearly beloved spiritual children, the following soul-profitting words of our Father among the Saints, Gregory the Great, known as the Dialogist (+604), which are excerpted from his homily on the Gospel pericope proclaimed before the closed doors of our holy temples in the earliest moments of Pascha morning (Mark 16:1-8):

We have heard how, according to the Evangelist Mark, Mary Magdalene, and the other holy women who had followed the Lord, came to the sepulchre, bringing sweet spices. For Him whom they had loved in life, they would also serve in death, and that with all care and tenderness. But in this there is indicated something which is to be done by all of us who are member of the holy Church. If we, who believe in Him that was dead, and is alive again, do come, seeking the Lord, and bearing with us the perfume of good works, and the sweet fragrance of holiness, then do we come, as it were to His sepulchre, bearing spices which are sweet indeed.

Wishing you and your families a glorious Paschal season perfumed with the sweet fragrance of good works and holiness, looking forward to being with you all at our Diocesan Family Reunion in Dallas this June 18th-21st, and assuring you of my continued love, prayers and blessings, I remain

Your Father in the Risen Christ,

+ B A S I L

Bishop of Wichita and Mid-America