

His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend  
Bishop BASIL



Archbishop of New York and  
Metropolitan of  
All North America

Diocese of Wichita and  
Mid-America

## ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

P A S C H A 2 0 1 7

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! **Christos anesti! Al-Maseeh qaam! Christos Voskresse! Hristos a înviat!**

As we prepare to celebrate the most glorious Feast of feasts in our beautifully adorned church temples across the Heartland of America, let us recall and be inspired by another glorious Pascha – this one celebrated in stark Block 26 at Dachau Concentration Camp in 1945:

“The room was bare, save for a wooden table and an icon of the Theotokos. A creative solution to the problem of the vestments was found. Linen towels were taken from the SS hospital. When sewn together lengthwise, two towels formed an epitrachelion, and when sewn end-to-end they became an orarion. Red crosses, originally intended to be worn by the medical personnel of the SS guards, were put on these towel-vestments. On Pascha, May 6<sup>th</sup>, countless Serbs, Greeks and Russians gathered in and around the barracks. In the entire history of the Orthodox Church there has probably never been a Paschal service like that one. Greek and Serbian priests together with a Serbian deacon wore the makeshift vestments over their blue and gray-striped prisoner’s uniforms. Then they began to chant, alternating from Greek to Slavonic, the Paschal Canon and the Paschal Stichera all from memory! The Gospel—“In the beginning was the Word”—from memory! And finally, the Paschal Homily of Saint John Chrysostom—also from memory! A young Greek monk from the Holy Mountain stood up in front of us and recited it with such infectious enthusiasm that we shall never forget him as long as we live. Eighteen Orthodox priests and one deacon concelebrated this unforgettable service.”

May our Paschal joy approximate in some small measure that experienced by those courageous Orthodox Christians in Dachau seventy-two years ago.

Wishing you and your families a glorious Paschal season, and looking forward to being with you all at our Diocesan Family Reunion hosted by St Anthony Church of Spring, Texas (June 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>), I remain

Your Father in the Risen Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bishop Basil". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

+Bishop Basil  
Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America

*“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)*

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