

Epistle of the Council of Bishops to all Archpastors, Pastors, Monastics and Faithful Children of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

Christ is Risen!

Beloved in the Lord, archpastors, reverend priests and deacons, venerable monastics, dear brothers and sisters: "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 1:1).

By the mercy of God, we, the archpastors of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, assembled in Hierarchical Council in the presence of the Directress of the Russian Diaspora, the Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God "of the Sign," in the Monastery of the Venerable New-Martyr Grand Duchess Elisabeth, and convened on the occasion of the centenary of the German Diocese — the first stronghold of Russian Orthodoxy Abroad, from which the formation of other dioceses followed for the pastoral care of the flock in the Diaspora — address you with the following message.

We all see how the processes of secularisation are intensifying, how moral landmarks are being obscured, and how faith wanes in many hearts. In such difficult conditions, it is especially important to preserve fidelity to Orthodoxy and to the traditions of the Russian Church Abroad, and likewise to follow the piety of our fathers and founders. We are reminded of this by the words of the Apostle and Evangelist John: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

Recognising such faithfulness and sanctity is an ever-ongoing process in the life of the Church. Responding to the numerous appeals of the faithful, the Council of Bishops, having recognised the righteous course of life of the ever-memorable Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose), has blessed the process of preparing his ecclesiastical glorification among the ranks of our venerable Fathers.

In these radiant Paschal days, feeling the special mercy and grace which are a foretaste of eternal joy in the Kingdom of Heaven, we call all of you to a careful and attentive spiritual life: to regular prayer, to repentance, to the reception of the Mysteries of Christ, to participation in the Divine Services, and to the reading of the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Holy Fathers. Our parishes must be living communities, and our families havens of Christian love.

With pain we perceive the sufferings of those in various countries of this world: wars, conflicts and persecutions unfolding against Christians, and indeed against all those now enduring a multitude of hardships — especially in the fratricidal war waged between Christians born of the same baptismal font of Kievan Rus'. In such a present moment, we remind you of the need for intensified prayer for peace, for the cessation of bloodshed, for those who suffer, for those who sorrow and are heavy-laden, and for the triumph of God's Truth. Each of us is called to be a bearer of the peace and love of Christ in our life, and likewise to follow the words of the Apostle Paul, "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

The Council of Bishops recognises the complexity of contemporary bioethical questions and the necessity of the pastoral defence of the human person. New biomedical technologies grant man the possibility of determining for himself the boundaries of life and death. Yet in this there lies a great spiritual danger. Therefore, the Council of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad has established a bioethical commission, which is charged to provide both pastors and flock with clear guidance.

Particular attention in our time should be given to the formation of the young generation now being nurtured in our Church. Modern means of communication, especially the Internet, have become an integral part of human life; but it is necessary to employ them with discernment and for spiritual benefit. We warn all against a heedless and uncritical immersion in the digital environment, which is so capable of distracting from an inner life, from prayer, and from living ecclesial and human interaction.

At the Council, the creation of a charitable foundation for the assistance of clergy and members of their families in need was approved, which, with the help of parish councils, will in the near future be implemented at diocesan levels.

We address all the faithful children of the Orthodox Church living in the Diaspora: Preserve the Orthodox Faith. Follow the commandments of God. Persevere in good labours. Let your life become a living testimony of the Gospel to those around you. Be steadfast in the Faith, strengthen yourselves in hope in the Lord, and do not wander from the path of salvation.

We invoke God's blessing upon all of you.

Truly, Christ is Risen!

22 April/5 May, 2026

+ Metropolitan Nektar

+ Metropolitan Churl
+ Archbishop Cyril
+ Archbishop Gabriel

+ Bishop James
+ Eusebius
+ Bishop Spyridon
+ Bishop Michael
+ Bishop Peter

2026
+ Bishop Irenaeus
+ Bishop Theodosy
+ Bishop John