

† MACARIE
BISHOP OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX
DIOCESE OF NORTHERN EUROPE



GREETING CARD AND PASTORAL LETTER
FOR THE FEAST OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION

„DO VVE ALBOVV CHRIST RISE
IN OVR HEARTS? ”

Stockholm, 2025

My beloved,

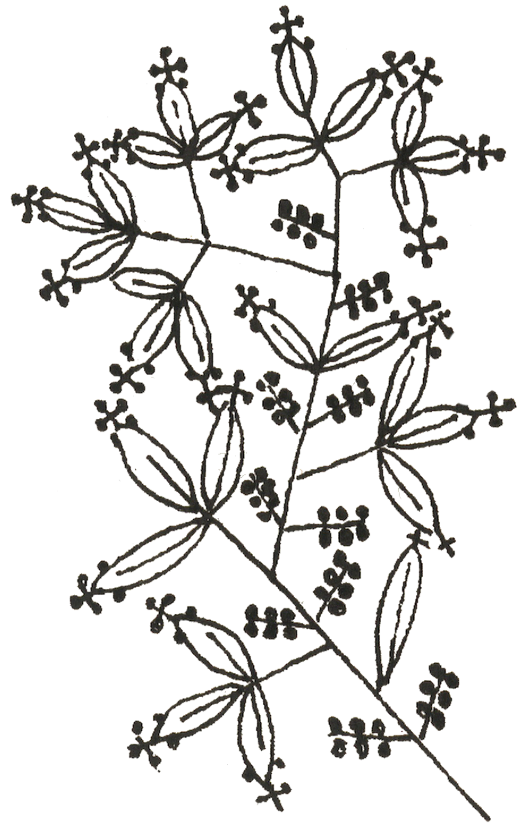
Christ is Risen!

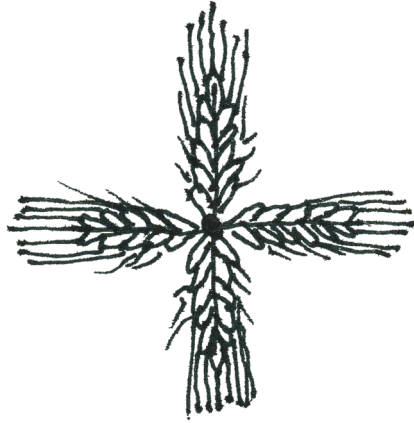
*On this holy day of the
Resurrection, when
heaven and earth rejoice
together, let us open wide
the gate of our hearts to
our Savior Jesus Christ—
the Crucified and Risen
One—so that He may
enter our souls and dispel
the darkness that surrounds us.*

May Christ rise in our hearts!

Your servant, brother, and friend,

+ Macarie Drăgoi





† MACARIE,

Through the mercy and care of the Most High, Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Northern Europe, to all beloved brethren—priests and deacons, fellow servants at the holy altar; to the members of monastic communities; and to the chosen faithful people of God—I extend grace, peace, serenity, and joy from Christ, the Crucified and Risen One. Together with my fatherly and brotherly embrace, receive my blessing, accompanied by the joyful Paschal greeting:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Dearly beloved,

The ancient Jewish people were led out of the bondage of Egypt by the Prophet Moses, but it was the righteous Joshua who brought them into the Promised Land. Along the way, the Israelites faced many enemies and had to conquer cities steeped in idolatry. At one such moment, before the battle against the city of Jericho, Joshua saw a man standing before him with a drawn sword. He approached and asked, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” The man replied, “Neither. But as commander of the army of the Lord, I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence and said, “What message does my Lord have for His servant?” (*Joshua 5:13–15*)

When Joshua realized that it was the angel of the Lord standing before him, he no longer asked whether the figure was on his side and the side of his people, or on that of their enemies. The only question he allowed himself to ask was what he must do to serve the living God. Even then, in the time of the Old Covenant, the essential question was not whose side God is on, but rather what God commands—and how a person can serve Him on earth.

All the more so in our time—the time of the New Covenant, sealed by Christ the Savior through His blood and Resurrection—the question we must ask ourselves is not whether the Lord is with us or whose side He is on, but rather: to what extent are we willing to follow His commandments and serve Him? To what extent do we love His Gospel and keep His commandments—those He gave us in the agony of the Cross and in the glory of His Resurrection?

Day by day, we witness how the world is being shaken—from those far away to those closest to us. Peace has been taken from the earth. Humanity, it seems, has lost its sense of proportion, and we have lost touch with one another: parents with children, brother with brother, nation with nation. In such a world, it becomes utterly pointless to ask whose side God is on amid all the conflicts and divisions we see around us. God is not on the side of those who plunge the world into chaos and war. God is not on the side of those who hate and despise their younger, poorer, or less educated brothers and sisters. God is not on the side of the unjust, who enslave their neighbors through power and domination. Nor is God on *our* side—unless we serve Him with fervent faith and deep humility. With the pious, God is pious; with the obstinate, God is obstinate (cf. Psalm 17:28–29).

Dear brother, dear sister,

What does it truly mean to serve the Lord in our daily lives? What does it mean, in the midst of this troubled world, to belong to Him—to become His disciples? True service is not found only in grand gestures or rare, extraordinary moments, but especially in the simple, quiet things—those filled with the Spirit.

To serve the Lord means to have compassion on a neighbor who may be going through hardship without ever speaking of it. It means to show patience and love toward those who are inwardly burdened or wounded in spirit. It means to pause amid our hurry, to truly look at the one beside us—husband, wife, child, parent, neighbor—and to say, through our actions: “You are loved. You are seen. You are not alone.”

To serve the Lord means to receive those He has placed in our lives—not as burdens, but as gifts. It means to sacrifice ourselves for them, to bow our hearts, to humble ourselves, and to renounce our selfishness, so that others may rise in the love of Christ.

To serve the Lord means to ache for those who weep alone and without comfort, for those lying on beds of pain in hospitals, for those abandoned in orphanages and care homes, for the forgotten in prisons, for those struggling in cold and lonely houses. Let us care for the children robbed of their childhood, for the elderly left behind, and for those who no longer know what hope feels like. Let us not pass them by with indifference. Let us not turn away. Let us cultivate in our hearts a holy sensitivity—a tenderness of soul that recoils at the suffering of others.

To serve the Lord means to love His creation—the flowers, the sky, the birds, the mountains, the rivers—but above all, to love His image in our neighbor. Every human being is an icon of Him, even if at times that icon is covered by the mud of sin or the wounds of life. Let us look with His eyes. Let us embrace with His heart. Let us forgive with His forgiveness.

To serve the Lord means to let our souls be wounded—yes, wounded—by the boundless, immeasurable love of the God who gave up His only Son to be nailed to the Cross, just so that you and I might have the chance to say, “Our Father,” to Him.

To serve the Lord means, dear brother and dear sister, to be present—here, in His holy house, before His divine altar—with a living heart, Sunday after Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy. Not as spectators, but as living members of His Mystical Body: The Church. To be at the Liturgy is to respond to the call of love from the One who waits for us—not because He needs us, but because He longs to give us everything: forgiveness, peace, and the joy of being with

Him. To be here, with an open heart, cleansed by Confession and nourished by His Body and Blood, is not merely a good habit or a religious duty—it is a confession of love: “Lord, I want to be with You, to receive You, and to live in You and for You.”

My sons and daughters in the Lord,

We often ask ourselves how many more chances God will give us to live the way we want—to follow the path we believe is right. But how many chances have we given Him? How many moments have we offered Him to touch us with the breath of the Spirit? How many opportunities have we given Him to lead us to repentance and renewal? How many Sundays have we entrusted to Him, to allow Him to speak to us and nourish us through the Divine Liturgy? He waits for us with a patience greater than all our failures. But how many of us are waiting for Him? How often do we silence the noise around us to hear His gentle whisper? How often, in the rush and restlessness of the world, do we make space for Him in our hearts?

Christ the Savior forces no doors. He does not coerce or impose. He waits. And His waiting is filled with a love that consumes without burning, enlightens without blinding, and saves without ever wounding our freedom. He knocks at the door of your heart—gently, quietly—with the tenderness of an old and faithful Friend who longs only to be received. Not with judgment, but with longing. Not with command, but with compassion. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.” (Revelation 3:20)

And now, in this holy hour of the Resurrection, what remains for us to do? One thing: to open our hearts to Him and make Him a dwelling place within us. Let us dare—yes, even if we feel crushed, unworthy, afraid, or lost. There is no wound He cannot heal. There is no sin—when confessed with tears of repentance in Confession—that is not forgiven. There is no inner death that the Risen Christ cannot transform into life.

Let us turn to Him with the trust of a child running into the arms of the Father. Let us turn to Him with the sincerity of

those who no longer wish to live far from the light. And as we sing in the Paschal Canon, let us say to Him with all our being: “Yesterday I was crucified with You, O Christ; today I rise with You in Your Resurrection.”

But for the Resurrection to become a lived reality, we must choose to rise with Christ—every day, every hour, every moment. Let us begin right now, dear brother, dear sister, by opening our hearts and allowing Christ to fill them with His peace, His love, and His grace. Let us never forget: Resurrection is a gift—but it is also a choice. Choose to live in the light of the Resurrection. Choose to let Christ rise in your heart!

Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

Yours in Christ, servant, father, brother, and friend—a well-wishing and fervent suppliant before the Lord,

† **Bishop Macarie**

Issued from the Episcopal Residence in Stockholm, in the Kingdom of Sweden, on the Holy Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Year of Our Salvation 2025.

On the cover: The Icon of the Resurrection of the Lord on the Iconostasis of the Romanian-Orthodox Parish Church “Honouring the Icon of the Mother of God, *Joy of All Who Sorrow*, St. Niphon the Bishop of Constantia, and Saints Macarius the Great and Macarius of Alexandria” in Vejle-Kolding, Kingdom of Denmark (icon: Stanislav Grecu)

Illustrations: Stefan Câlția