

† MACARIE
BISHOP OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF NORTHERN EUROPE



PASCHAL GREETING AND PASTORAL LETTER AT THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

STANDING WITH THE MOTHER OF GOD BENEATH
THE CROSS, WE JOURNEY TOWARD THE
VICTORY OF THE RESURRECTION!

STOCKHOLM, 2026



Icons: The icons of the Mother of God, “Self-Sacrificing Love”, and of the Saviour, the Great High Priest and the “True Vine”, together with the Holy Hierarchs, painted by the iconographer Toma-Gabriel Chituc in the niches of the holy Altar within the chapel at the parents’ home of His Grace, Bishop Macarie Drăgoi of Northern Europe, in Spermezeu, Bistrița-Năsăud County.

Drawings: Ștefan Câlția

My beloved,

Christ is risen!



Let us steadfastly keep the good thought, as the Mother of God did beneath the Cross, and let us not allow the darkness of our struggles to quench the light in our souls. Rather, let us firmly believe that after every Good Friday there comes the victory of the Resurrection, life conquering death.

May the peace of our Saviour, Christ crucified and risen, through the unceasing prayer and warm protection of the Mother of God, comfort your hearts, strengthen you in faith, hope, and love, and grant you true peace and holy joy all the days of your life.

Your servant, brother, pilgrim, and friend,

*+ Părintele Episcop Macarie Drăgoi
al Episcopiei Europei de Nord*





† MACARIE,

**by the mercy and providence of God,
Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox
Diocese of Northern Europe,**

**to the beloved priests and deacons, fellow ministers
of the holy altar, to the monastics, and to all the faithful
people: grace, peace, and joy from Christ crucified and
risen, and from me a fatherly blessing and brotherly
embrace, with the Paschal greeting:**

CHRIST IS RISEN!

My beloved,

“He is not here; for He is risen, as He said”
(Matthew 28:6).

With these words full of light, the Church sets us today before the empty Tomb, not to see an absence, but to be assured of the presence of Life that has overcome death, of hope that has shattered despair, of light that has scattered the darkness. In this mystery of the Resurrection, we cannot forget the presence of the Mother of God, she who stood by the Cross at the most terrible moment in the history of the world, and did not waver.

On Calvary, the Mother of God could not have endured such pain had she not held fast to the good thought of faith: that what was happening was not the end, but the beginning of victory. In the depth of her heart she knew that her Son would rise; therefore she did not collapse or fall into despair. The good thought was her support in that terrible suffering. Inwardly, on Golgotha, she suffered with Him, was crucified with Him, and died with Him, that she might also rise.

In the midst of her sorrow, the Mother of God kept alive the hope of the Resurrection, not as a mere comfort, but as a deep and unshakable certainty, hidden within, which illumined her soul even when everything seemed swallowed up by darkness. Therefore she was not only a witness of the Resurrection, but one who, in her soul, rose together with her Son, because she did not doubt, did not stumble, and did not allow her grief to extinguish her faith, even though, as the righteous Simeon had foretold, a sword passed through her soul (cf. Luke 2:35).

Therefore, brothers and sisters, when we pass through hardships, let us gather ourselves from our scattered thoughts, bringing light to mind and heart, and let us firmly hold on to the good thought, even when everything around us feels heavy and without a way out. Let us not allow darkness to take hold of our soul, neither fear, nor depression, nor despair, nor judgment, but let us consciously choose light, hope, and trust in God, remembering always that no suffering is without meaning and no cross is without resurrection. For after every Good Friday comes Pascha; after the storm, the sun rises; and after tears, we are filled with everlasting joy.

My dear ones,

Truly, we live in troubled times, when unrest, judgment, distrust, and fear try to enter our hearts. Yet the real struggle is not outside, but within, at the level of the mind. As Saint John Climacus teaches, it is not enough to drive out evil; we are called to replace it with good: judgment with prayer for our neighbour, anger with gentleness, and suspicion with a pure and loving attitude.

Saint Paisios of Mount Athos places great emphasis on the “good thought” (*kalos logismos*), which brings the grace of God. Our whole spiritual life is built—or ruined—according to how we choose to see things. The same situation can be seen in two ways: one dark and distorted, which troubles the soul; the other bright and pure, which brings peace and joy. The spiritual person does not wait for proof in order to do good, but chooses goodness from the beginning, as an expression of trust in God and love for neighbour.

In everyday life, this practice of the good thought is lived out in simple but decisive ways: if someone does not greet you, do not say, “he ignored me,” but rather, “he must be tired or burdened”; if someone speaks harshly, do not say, “he insulted me,” but, “the poor man is going through a difficult time”; if someone is late, do not judge him as careless, but think, “perhaps something urgent came up”; if someone does not reply to your message, do not think, “he doesn’t care,” but, “he must be overwhelmed”; if someone avoids you, say, “he too may be carrying a burden”; if someone succeeds where you do not, do not give way to envy, but say, “Glory to God, who has helped him—and will help me as well!”; and if you see a fault in another,

cover it with understanding and say, "I could have done the same."

In the family, if someone close to you does not understand you, do not say, "he does not love me," but, "he does not know how to show it." If a child makes a mistake, correct him with regard to his weakness and age. At work, if someone disagrees with you, do not immediately assume he is against you, but that he may simply see things differently.

And in every difficult situation, choose to pray: *"Lord, help me to see and to do all things in the light of Your countenance, in the gentleness of Your heart, and in the humility of Your mind; that I may not judge, nor condemn, nor be troubled, but receive all things with peace, trust, and love."*

By cultivating the good thought in this way, a person not only avoids the sin of judgment, but is filled with grace, for he purifies the eye of the heart and begins to see the world with mercy and love, as God sees it. In this way, the spiritual person works not only for his own salvation, but also for that of his neighbour!

Dear brother, dear sister,

At the end, I would like to share with you a living and encouraging testimony from the life of Elder Ephraim of Arizona, a spiritual father whom I was able, by God's grace, to meet in his lifetime and from whom I received guidance. He prayed fervently and was deeply concerned about the salvation of modern man. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself appeared to him and urged him to guide people to ascend four steps:

1. Life in the Church.

To be a living member of the Church, not only in name, but in the way we live our whole life: to take part in the Divine Liturgy, to confess, to receive Holy Communion, and to shape our lives by the Church's worship. For in the Church we receive life, light, and strength.

2. The Jesus Prayer. *"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me."*

This prayer, said continually, cleanses the mind and brings peace to the heart through God's presence in our life. It draws grace into the depths of the soul and brings peace where there is turmoil. And when, with humility and perseverance, we hold the prayer rope and say this prayer on each knot—each one becoming a step toward God, a living call, a knocking at the door of divine mercy—the prayer rope becomes a spiritual weapon. Each knot becomes like a bullet with which we drive away the enemies of our salvation, overcoming evil thoughts and strengthening ourselves in the unseen struggle under the shelter of God's grace.

3. A living bond with the Mother of God.

The Most Holy Theotokos is not far away, she is always near. She is quick to help, a protector, and full of compassion. She teaches us to stand by the Cross without despair, and to die to sin so that we may rise to eternal life. She grieves when we do not ask for her help, not because she needs to be called, but because we lose the comfort and support she offers with such love. For this reason, the Church has given us countless prayers to her, many of which, by God's grace, we were able to collect in *The Prayer Book of the Diocese of Northern*

Europe. Yet beyond all of them, the simplest and most ready to hand remains: “*Most Holy Mother of God, have mercy on me!*” said with faith, humility, and childlike trust.

4. The cultivation of the good thought.

This is the ongoing work of the soul: to seek light instead of darkness, and to meet and receive others with love, without suspicion, seeing the good even where it seems hidden.

Therefore, let us not be afraid of these times. As the hermit Proclu Nicău said, “it is not the times that are hard, but the sins of men.” Let us pray that wars may cease and that the peace which comes from above may be poured out upon the world and upon our souls.

Let us not be overcome by darkness, nor lose heart. If the Mother of God was able to stand beneath the Cross, then we too will be able to stand beneath the Cross, with patience and faith, overcoming and rising together with Christ.

Let us set the good thought like a light burning in our hearts. Let us increase our prayer, which is the breath of the soul. Let us remain in the ship of the Church, for the waves outside are great and threatening. Let us place ourselves under the gentle and protecting veil of the Mother of God, who stands at the helm together with her Son, guiding us with gentleness and love toward the calm harbour of salvation, where there is no storm, no fear, but only peace, joy, and the unending light of the Resurrection.

Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

Your fellow servant, father, brother, and pilgrim, one who desires all good for you and prays fervently to the Lord,

† Bishop Macarie

Given at the Episcopal Residence in Stockholm, Kingdom of Sweden, on the Feast of the Resurrection of the Lord, in the year of salvation 2026.



His Grace Bishop Macarie Drăgoi of Northern Europe baptising the young Inuit Qillaq, on Wednesday, 18th March 2026, in Qaqortoq, Greenland. At Baptism, he received the name Cleopa, after Saint Cleopa of Sihăstria.



Brothers and sisters in Christ,

From the frozen lands of Greenland there rises a living witness: here, where there seems to be only cold and desolation, the grace of God warms hearts and makes the Gospel take root and bear fruit, even where the human eye sees only ice, isolation, and solitude.

Even in the bitter cold and great remoteness, I found faith, a real hunger and thirst for God, and a deep spiritual unity that goes beyond all distance, an inner warmth that only the Saviour can give. Just as the sun shone unexpectedly over these Arctic lands at the moment I celebrated the Divine Liturgy, so Christ, the Sun of righteousness, brings light and warmth to the lives of those who seek Him.

Even here in Greenland, among the glaciers, faith has begun to take root, for instance in the heart of the young Greenlander Cleopa Qillaq (whom I baptised in the icy waters of the ocean), and in the hearts of Inuit who have received the Gospel with a real longing for light.

Therefore I urge you: let us soften the hardness of our hearts, and allow God's love to soften our hardened hearts and kindle in us the fire of true faith!

*† Bishop Macarie of Northern Europe,
from Greenland, 21st March 2026*