almost beloved in the risen Lord:

Death and corruption are realities that confront all human beings on a daily basis. All of us face the certainty of our own physical death, the suffering of our loved ones’ illnesses and the division of our communities through various human passions.

And yet on this day, the radiant and holy day of Pascha, the light of Christ has risen upon all mortal human beings, shining with the light of the Lord’s victory over hell, corruption and death itself. On this day, the Lord’s promise that whosoever liveth and believeth on me, shall never die is fulfilled in us, for His victory has become our victory.

The Holy Apostle Paul reminds us of this when he says: Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should also walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection (Romans 6:3-5)

The feast of Pascha is not simply a commemoration of Christ’s rising from the dead; it is the celebration of the reality of our own resurrection, a confirmation within the depth of our hearts that even in our darkest moments of pain and struggle, Christ is with us, offering us His peace, His joy and His life.

As we celebrate the Feast of Feasts, let us all receive that light in our hearts and rejoice in the Lord with thanksgiving for His great victory, crying out: Yesterday, O Christ, I was buried with Thee, and today I rise again with Thee, in Thy rising. Yesterday I was crucified with Thee, now glorify me, O Savior, in Thy Kingdom (Paschal Canon, Ode III).

Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!

+ Bishop Tikhon
Christ is risen from the dead trampling down death by death and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

“In its 95th year, Assumption of the Virgin Church in Philadelphia celebrated Pascha with piety, reverence and sobriety, quiet and fervent worship, participating and sharing in the light of our Lord’s Resurrection. After the full round of the services of Great Lent and Holy Week, long-anticipated Pascha dawned cool but damp - we did not process around the church because of the wet steps and sidewalks. The crowd was a little thin when we began at 8:30, but by the time we started Liturgy, the church was almost full. It was a joy to pray and sing in such a sparkling, polished, and decorated holy place. We will hold services every Saturday night and Sunday (for the benefit of those who, when they come to church, only hear "Christ is Risen!") After the Resurrection of our Lord, as did the disciples and apostles, we turn our attention outward. With God’s help we will rejuvenate our parish and work to bring the Good News to our neighborhood and beyond.”

- Archpriest John Udics, Rector
  Priest Sergius Willis

St. Tikhon’s Monastery, South Canaan

Holy Trinity, Pottstown

St. Nicholas, Philadelphia
At the 2007 Diocesan Assembly last November, His Grace, Bishop Tikhon appointed a Task Force on Missions for the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. The first meeting of this Task Force met at St. John the Baptist Church in Edwardsville on the evening of January 24, 2008. A second meeting was held at Holy Apostles Mission in Mechanicsburg on Thursday, February 21.

At both meetings, His Grace offered a vision of what he saw for the Diocese in terms of both establishing new missions and revitalizing older parishes that have seen decline in recent years. He emphasized that the purpose of the Task Force was to encourage the involvement of the entire diocese: deaneries, parishes and individuals, both clergy and faithful, in the work of spreading the Gospel of Christ.

At the second meeting, it was decided to send a short Parish Life Survey to all the parishes of the Diocese in order to lay the groundwork for further work in these areas. Father Daniel Kovalak, the Assistant to the Bishop for Missions, presented a report on National Church Development (NCD) International, which is a program that is being considered as a possible tool to help the work of Missions not only in this diocese but throughout the Orthodox Church in America. Further studies will be made.

Another meeting of the Task Force will be scheduled soon, at which time the results of the Parish Life Survey will be discussed and further actions taken in terms of Mission within this diocese.

Taskforce members:

V. Rev. Daniel Kovalak
V. Rev. Michael Hatrak
V. Rev. Vladimir Fetcho
V. Rev. John Udics
V. Rev. Dionysius Swencki
V. Rev. David Mahaffey
Rev. David Cowan
Rev. Nicholas Solak
Rev. Timothy Haseneez
Rev. Timothy Hojnicki
Rev. Stephen Vernak

Holy Trinity Church, Pottstown, grateful for eight years of service

The parish has said good-bye to choir director, Reader John Black, who directed his last Divine Liturgy on Pascha. Reader John was honored with a bouquet of red and white roses presented by Ms. Rebecca Hutnyan, parish council president. Both Rebecca and Fr. David Mahaffey expressed gratitude for Reader John's service on behalf of the parish and commented on Reader John's dedication and talent and his willingness to volunteer his services. Reader John has directed Holy Trinity's choir since Mid-feast of Pascha, 2000. During those eight years, Reader John expanded the repertoire of music and achieved with the singers a reputation of excellence in the diocese. Reader John has accepted a position as choir director at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Philadelphia. His son, also Reader Jon Black, has accepted the position as choir director at Holy Trinity. Father and son worked together at Holy Trinity to ensure that all services would be covered for a full liturgical cycle since both men are employed full time outside the parish. Reader Jon was choir director when Fr. David Mahaffey was rector in Old Forge, PA.
Kasmrak Studios to restore windows at St. John's, Edwardsville

At a Parish Meeting following Divine Liturgy on St. Thomas Sunday, the parish voted to begin a window restoration program in the Church as the parish looks ahead to its Centennial in 2010-11. The project will be done by Kasmrak Studios of Luzerne and will cost $54,000. Generous donors have already given $6,500 to the project, and at the meeting itself a further $5,500 was pledged by Mrs. Katherine Chincilla of Dallas, Texas, a native of St. John's, and her daughter. The remaining $42,000 will be raised in and through the parish without incurring further debt. Any former parishioners who wish to contribute are welcome to do so and may contact Fr. Martin Browne, the Rector, at 570 287-7186.

Wonderworking Kursk Root Icon to visit at St. Tikhon’s 104th Annual Pilgrimage

The Kursk Root Icon of the Mother of God "Of the Sign" is one of the most ancient icons of the Russian Church. In the thirteenth century during the Tatar invasion, when all the Russian realm was put to the extremist tribulation, the city of Kursk, ravaged by the Horde of Batu, fell into desolation.

One day in the environs of the city a hunter noticed the ancient icon, lying on a root face downwards to the ground. Just as the hunter lifted up the holy icon from the earth, right then, at that place where the icon lay, gushed up strongly a spring of pure water. This occurred on September 8, 1259. The hunter decided not to leave the icon in the forest and settled on as a resting place an ancient small chapel, in which he put the newly-appeared image of the Theotokos. Soon inhabitants of the city of Ryl'a heard about this, and they began to visit the place of the appearance for venerating the new holy image.

They transferred the icon to Ryl'a and put it in a new church in honor of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos. But the icon did not long remain there. It disappeared and returned to its former place of appearance. The inhabitants of Ryl'a repeatedly took it and carried it to the city, but the icon incomprehensibly returned to its former place. Everyone then realized, that the Theotokos preferred the place where She was originally found. Since the appearance of this holy icon, many have been miraculously healed of maladies, including St. Seraphim of Sarov, a native of Kursk, when he was a young child.