

Hellenic Republic
Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece
The Holy Synod

Athens, December 15/28, 2022

To be read in Church on the
Feast of the Nativity

Protocol No. 3218

NATIVITY MESSAGE for 2022

*“The Lord Jesus, our Redemption, Illumination,
Life, and Salvation, is now born of a Virgin in Bethlehem.”
(Troparion from the Prefestal Canon of December 20)*

Beloved Fathers and Brethren; Beloved Children in the Lord Who is Born:

Our Forefather Adam became an enemy of God in the Paradise of delight through his disobedience. He departed thence, bequeathing to us, his progeny, opposition to the Divine Will. We all have within us seed for the repudiation of obedience to God, which leads us to apostasy and perdition.

However, the New Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, came down to earth, being born in Bethlehem of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, not only in order to correct the fault of the old Adam, but also for the sake of all of us, his unhappy descendants, who likewise have sinned and do sin.

We may not have known the old Adam personally, but when we sin, we do precisely what puts us on a level with him in disobedience. And when, contrariwise, we do not sin, but maintain our blessed obedience to the New Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, then we abide in a relationship of familiarity and communion with the new and true Author of our race, Who offers us sinlessness as a gift! (See Saint Symeon the New Theologian, *Alphabetical Chapters*, Chapter 5.)

This is the most wondrous, important, and sublime encounter we have in this life: personal communion with Christ the Savior in His Holy Orthodox Church, so that we might fulfill our eternal, Divine vocation in the Kingdom of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

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Our Incarnate Lord accomplished the entire salvific work of the Divine Economy so that we might believe in it deeply, so that we might accept it in our lives and receive by means of it the gift of the Holy Spirit, through the Holy Mysteries and the holy virtues. Without the Holy Spirit, we remain wretched and helpless, hapless and vulnerable, insecure and unredeemed. Our concerns are confined to the here and now, remaining pedestrian, corruptible, ephemeral, and earthly. For this reason, the cultivation and

promotion of the passions give rise to wars and conflicts in our world, within us, around us, and everywhere on earth.

However, when we allow the Holy Spirit to visit us and take up His abode in us, then He refashions and renews us, sanctifying our mind, our conscience, and all of our senses. Then, the corruptible life that nestles within us and draws the yea of the soul to carnal and worldly inclinations and desires gives place to the new and blessed state of incorruptibility. Thus it is that we acquire a taste for Heaven, a portion of its light and warmth. Our soul is aroused and participates with exultation in the serene Angelic melody. Likewise, profound peace and blessing unfold in the onetime dark, dank, cold, and inhospitable earth of our heart.

Christ was born to change radically and to overturn utterly our human criteria and assumptions, rendering attainable what was thitherto regarded as an elusive and unimaginable state and reality. He came to offer us true life, that is, to transform evil into goodness, corruption into incorruption, sin into virtue, Hell into Paradise, earth into Heaven, man into God!

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Beloved Fathers and Brethren:

How are these things achieved in our daily life? Through repentance! Repentance changes and transfigures everything in man. It encompasses in itself the creative and Divine power which begins with small changes from sin to virtue and extends as far as holiness without end.

If his mind ceases from being preoccupied with everything unclean and harmful, if his words put an end to malice, if his senses desist from actual sin, then a new man is born. He is a true Christian.

If his eyes shed bitter tears of regret for whatever wickedness has happened, if he gives promises of true repentance and keeps them, so that constant transgressions come to an end, then the man in Christ lives and grows. And he strives at all costs not to succumb to all manner of impiety, shamelessness, and greed, so as not to fall from Grace. Indeed, he is especially heedful not to turn aside into harshness, vindictiveness, or pitilessness toward his neighbor, since, if he does, he will obliterate his salvific repentance and will thus forfeit his labors in vain and for naught.

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Beloved Brethren:

May we, on the occasion of the Nativity of the Divine Infant, remain faithful and godly, honorable and sincere, struggling and attentive, joyful and hopeful, repentant and merciful, enduring and forgiving, and above all genuine and unhypocritical. And may the God of peace, love, and truth bless us and abide with us, as Emmanuel, all of our days, until the end of the age. Amen!

Christ is Born!

THE HOLY SYNOD

The Archbishop

† Kallinikos of Athens

The Members

- † Ioustinos of Euripos and Euboia
- † Gerontios of Piræus and Salamis
- † Chrysostomos of Attica and Boiotia
 - † Gregorios of Thessalonike
 - † Photios of Demetrias
 - † Moses of Toronto
 - † Demetrius of America
- † Ambrosios of Philippi and Maroneia
 - † Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle
- † Klemes of Larisa and Platamon
 - † Ambrose of Methone
- † Auxentios of Etna and Portland
 - † Theodosios of Brethena
- † Christodoulos of Theoupolis
 - † Maximus of Pelagonia

[signed and sealed as a BONA FIDE COPY]

The First Secretary

† Photios of Demetrias