

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

Athens, December 17/30, 2024

To be read in Church on the
Feast of the Nativity

Protocol No. 3377

NATIVITY MESSAGE for 2024

“Bowing the Heavens, Christ abode entire in thy womb, O All-Pure One, as He willed; for not being able to endure the sight of the creation of His hands tormented by the deceiver, He came in the form of a servant to redeem the human race.”
(Theotokion, Second Canon at Matins for St. Nicholas, Ode 6)

Beloved Fathers and Brethren in the Lord Who is Born:

God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, by the goodwill of the Father and the coöperation of the Holy Spirit, came down “entire,” without diminishing the loftiness of His Divinity, into the immaculate womb of the Ever-Virgin Theotokos and “dwelt among us” (St. John 1:14).

For God in His “tender mercies” (St. Luke 1:78) could not endure the misery of His suffering, Divinely-fashioned creature man, who was held in honor (cf. Psalm 48:13) but had been dishonored by the deceitful Devil and reduced to his terrible and tyrannical captivity.

The love of God, which has neither measure nor limit, put into practice a perfect plan of re-creation, a plan of Divine wisdom and power, nonpareil and incomparable in grandeur and one truly befitting God.

We confess in the Symbol of Faith that the Son of God “for us men and for our salvation came down from the Heavens and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary.”

Assuredly, God did not experience any change of place; rather, this was a Divine condescension. The Word, without changing as to His Divinity, assumed something which He had not thitherto had: He became man and consorted with man upon earth (Baruch 3:38). The God-Man Christ concealed all the glory of His Godhead behind the veil of the flesh that He borrowed from the Most Holy Theotokos Mary.

This unique miracle of Divine goodness completely surpasses us, and we simply adore it with awe and thanksgiving. All created things offer inexpressible gratitude, and we have offered a “Virgin Mother,” the glory and boast of our race, our joy, delight, consolation, comfort, and hope!

In Christ, in the Divine Infant of Bethlehem, Divine and human antitheses are manifested and emphasized from the outset, for the fulfillment of the Mystery of the Divine Economy that transcends reason: abasement in glory, pain in joy, death in life!

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Beloved Brethren:

These are precisely the chief hallmarks of every faithful member of our now renewed humanity.

They were the hallmarks of Mary, the Virgin Mother, the humble and pure Maiden, she who was shown to be a “Heaven and Temple of the Godhead” (*Dogmatikon* at Vespers in the First Tone).

These antithetical hallmarks characterized the Holy Apostles, and also characterize all of the true members of the Church of Christ, as Paul, the great Apostle of the Nations, superbly summarizes it: “By honor and dishonor; by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (II Corinthians 6:8-10).

If all of these do not become—to some degree and in some way—our own experience, our own history, our own truth, and our own mystical life of crucifixion and resurrection, then we are not real disciples of Christ and celebrators of the Divine Incarnation. If we remain simply at the human, historical, customary, psychological, sentimental, gastronomical, narrative, and romantic, etc., level of celebration and are unable sincerely to reiterate the aforementioned holy Apostolic words as the culmination of our Christian life and existence, then we do not know what is a true Christmas, as happens, unfortunately, with the majority of the nominally Christian world.

Beloved Brethren:

Our Lord Jesus Christ is our only Savior and Redeemer. It is He Who brought us from non-existence into existence in order that we might share in His bounties and become partakers of His life, become “like” Him (I St. John 3:2), and be gods by Grace, called to “fellowship” with Him (I Corinthians 1:9), everlastingly “blessed” (St. Matthew 25:34) in His unending Kingdom.

By His Divine Nativity and redemptive work, all of these things have been given and inaugurated for all of us without exception. Let us not exchange our Divine gifts and Divine expectations for anything else in this world of decay and deceit.

Let us remain firm in faith and virtue, so that the following Apostolic exhortation might constitute the irreproachable guiding principle for us until the end of our present life: “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong; let all that ye do be done in love” (I Corinthians 16:13-14); and “the God of peace shall be with you” (Philippians 4:9).

Christ is Born!

THE HOLY SYNOD

The Archbishop

† Kallinikos of Athens

The Members

† 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
† Kyprianos of Oropos and Phyle
† Klemes of Larisa and Platamon
† Ambrose of Methone
† Auxentios of Etna and Portland
† Christodoulos of Theoupolis
† Maximus of Pelagonia

Assistant Bishops

† Daniel of Nikopolis (Jakarta)
† Kallinikos of Talantion
† Benedict of Astoria

[signed and sealed as a BONA FIDE COPY]

The First Secretary
† Photios of Demetrias