



ΓΝΗΣΙΑ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ
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December 25, the Year of Our Lord 2017
(January 7, 2018 NS)

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord in the Flesh

The Nativity Epistle of Bishop Irineos

Beloved Clergy and Faithful of the North American Mission
of the Genuine Orthodox Church of the Patristic Calendar,

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

O Joyous Night, when He Who even the heavens could not contain, willed to be contained in the mortal and frail clothing of our humanity for our salvation! O Joyous Night, when He Who was in his essence unknowable, became known in his incarnate form. O Joyous Night, when He Who was before time, condescended to dwell with us in time, so that we might know life outside of time.

Dear in Christ, it should perhaps not be a surprise that in a faith which focuses us on our repentance even to our last breath, in a faith which annually dedicates the coming 40 days of Lent to somber reflection before the celebratory Feast of Pascha, and in a faith which constantly calls upon the Lord for His mercy, mindful of our own unworthiness, there is a danger that we find ourselves morose and forlorn, beaten down by our own inadequacies before our Lord and God – a danger that we live in faith, but without joy. In this, we err; let us instead celebrate!

Today, on the Feast of Nativity, let our weeping be turned into joy! For He Who is God condescended to take on our fallen humanity and redeem it, restoring the communion broken by our First Parents, and setting aright a broken creation. The Son became matter, sanctifying all matter, and through His sanctification and ultimate atoning sacrifice, we received the promise of eternal life.

In this let us always rejoice! It is said that each Sunday is a mini-Pascha, where we relive weekly the joyous news of Christ's glorious Resurrection. Let us also with each breaking day, relive the joy of the birth in the flesh of He Whom we hymn as the Sun of Righteousness and the Dayspring from on High.

Thus, brothers and sisters, even as we are weighed down by the cares of the world or lost in the mire of our own failing, let us always remember that He Who condescended to enter into humanity with us as a little babe is daily a cause of joy for all who honor Him in faith and in love.

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

Wishing you a joyous Feast with my Love and Episcopal Blessings,

+ *Irineos*

+ Irineos
Vicar Bishop for North America

