

**NATIVITY EPISTLE**  
**Of The Most Reverend Tikhon,**  
**Archbishop of Omsk and Siberia,**  
**First Hierarchy of the Russian True Orthodox Church**

**To all the faithful children of the Russian True Orthodox Church  
in the Fatherland and in the Diaspora**

Dear brother hierarchs in the Lord, most reverent pastors,  
zealous monastics and ascetic strugglers,  
God-loving flock of the Russian True Orthodox Church!

*For the life was manifested, and we have seen it,  
and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life,  
which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.*

(1 John 1:2)

I greet you with the great day of the Nativity of Christ, with God's great condescension to us sinners, with the manifestation of Divine love! Christ is born, come to restore our fallen human image.

All believing Jews waited for the Messiah, the Christ, for a long time, and the wisest of the pagans of the Old Testament also waited. They hoped the Messiah would make the path of virtuous life easier for every person, and that he would establish justice on earth, so that no longer would sinners rule over the righteous, nor pagans over right-believing Jews, but the Son of God Himself would become the victorious king to bring general happiness to earth and renew blissful life. Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is now born in Bethlehem, reveals a great mystery of piety, brings new life and calls Himself the Life of all, as He Himself said in the last days of His earthly life: *I am the way, and the truth, and the life* (John 14:6). Almighty God, as a wonderful Child, condescended to become human, suffering and languishing in sins, through His ineffable love, in order to make us children of God. Heaven and earth rejoice at this

extraordinary miracle. Angels give glory, shepherds rush to worship Him, the Magi journey with a star. For our sake, the Eternal God becomes a young Child.

Hearing the Gospel story, remembering the Nativity of Christ, imbued with compunctionate church chants, unspeakable joy fills our hearts. And the soul aspires to the manger of Christ - there to the holy Bethlehem, where God Himself, the Creator of the Universe, and the Savior of men, now dwells in a wretched cave as a meek Infant. There, in childish simplicity, the soul prostrates with the shepherds before the manger of the newborn Child, pours out all her hardships and sorrows before the pure Lamb, washes her wretchedness with abundant tears, and in bright hope prays to Him for comfort and salvation. I see a strange and glorious mystery: the Nativity scene becomes heaven, the Most Pure Virgin a cherubic throne, a manger contains the uncontainable God. So come to His manger, all believers! This is why the Bethlehem manger is dear, the Divine Infant crying there, who voluntarily accepted the appearance of a slave, is close to all of us. For this, one does not need to travel like the Magi; Bethlehem is not far from us: here, in the temple, on the zhertvennik in the Liturgy, in the manger the Lamb of God is laid and slain. He is here with us, for it is said: where two or three are gathered in His name, there He is among them. It is convenient here to worship Him, by communion of the Holy Mysteries of Christ at the manger, arranging our souls and hearts. First of all, let the children come to Him. He loves them, and speaks with authority: *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God* (Mark 10:14). Let the children look at the Young Child - the Divine Infant, who has become like them, let them worship Him and sing of His Nativity.

Go to Him, ye who are in need of comfort, who suffer in need, sorrow, trouble and disease... Go all who suffer and are burdened, who with tears from the lack of bread now greet this holiday (Matthew 11:28). Grieve not, poor man! Your King and Savior is close to your grief; He Himself, who had no rest and refuge, knows what you need. He came down to earth to save you, to resurrect your soul to the primordial blessedness. Let your body grieve, starve, become sick with sorrows: walk in His way: "With many sorrows you enter into the Kingdom of God." In His name, carry the cross given to you by Him - sorrow, deprivation, illness. Say like Him: "Thy will be done." He came with us beggars to beg, with mourners to mourn, with us poor to be in poverty. He came to accept the world's sorrow, the sins of the world and became

like us in everything except sin. Be not embarrassed by the condescension of the Son of God, by which He brought all mankind closer to Him. The Most High God came down to earth and will raise us to heaven. And those who accept His life, who follow in His footsteps and unite with Him, in truth cease to experience that dissatisfaction with life and yearning, which languishes people who know not Christ.

Today, when the sea of life seems especially dangerous and impassable, ready to swallow all of humanity in its whirlpool, when the forces of hell more and more harden in ferocity and deceive with cunning, it is especially important always to remember this truth. We must firmly know that the Lord certainly changes everything that occurs on our path in life into salvation for those who love Him. Just come, fall down before the wonderful manger of the Infant God, bow down and sing His Grace, unspeakable to us sinners. Not a single tear drop, not a single part of a drop is hidden from the now-born Savior, always standing at the doors of our hearts, always ready to transform our sorrow into joy. All Scripture, all prophets, apostles, holy fathers and all the saints of the Orthodox Church inspire this in us. Whatever surging crashes against us, we will not be afraid, we will not be carried away by those who sow fear and panic in the present world, but more than ever we will study the lives of the saints who, for the sake of Christ and the future blessed life, have passed their mournful earthly path as victors. Let us firmly hold fast: from henceforth the powers of evil are powerless, from henceforth they are doomed! For Christ is born! God is with us!

For the sake of Christ who is born, wealthy people should sympathize and help their sorrowful needy neighbor. Do ye wish to come closer to the Newborn? Bring Him a gift, clothe Him; shelter Him from the cold: and you can always do this. Over there, at the church doors, maybe your brother stands, for whose salvation the Lord has come. He stands and cries, exhausted under the weight of his life's cross, with only hope for a miracle... Show him mercy! Thirst to give drink to the thirsty for a drink; clothe the naked, visit the sick, comfort the grieving. For so Christ will draw near to you, receive your mercy: and reward you with mercy, as is His word: *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me* (Matthew 25:40). He unites all, He came for all, we are all brothers in Christ.

The incarnate God-Infant Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church to this day and to the end of the ages. From Him, as from an inexhaustible and Lifegiving Source, life-giving grace-

filled forces flow throughout the Church's body, reviving, purifying, and renewing the faithful. In His Holy Church there are all the Holy Mysteries and Holy Virtues by which we are saved into new life, eternal life. The joy we experience on these wonderful Christmas days in the Church is higher than earthly sorrows, losses, betrayals and hardships! Therefore, Christians, let us rejoice now in the great mystery of God's Incarnation: we will share this joy and love with our neighbors, singing a song of praise with the Angels: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men* (Luke 2:14).

I congratulate you all, faithful children of the True Church of Christ:

A blessed Nativity of the God-child Jesus Christ!

Nativity of Christ 2020/2021

**Unworthy Tikhon**

**By the grace of God, Archbishop of Omsk and Siberia,**

**First Hierarchy of the Russian True Orthodox Church**