



## Diocese of Boston & the Americas

### NATIVITY EPISTLE

December, 2025

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men. (Luke 2:14)

With these words, the heavenly host praised the birth of the Messiah, the Son of God incarnate, fulfilling God's will, as spoken through His prophets, to redeem mankind's fallen nature, caused through Adam's sin.

In the year of our Savior's birth, a census was announced. According to Roman laws every person (men and women) was required to be counted in his own city. Because of this, Joseph and the holy Virgin Mary (in her expectant state) traveled to Bethlehem, where Jesus Christ our Savior was to be born. Thus, the prophesy of the Prophet Mica was fulfilled.

Due to their poverty, and finding no room at the inn, Joseph and the holy Virgin Mary had to shelter in one of the caves found throughout Palestine, where shepherds would keep their flocks during inclement weather. There, in such a manger, the Messiah, the Son of God, was quietly born, placed in a feeding trough.

Such meekness, such humility! Yet, from His very birth, Christ shows us the mistaken faith and preaching of the pharisees, sadducees, and scribes, who awaited a messiah to be the ruler-king, and conqueror for their own worldly grandeur.

Spiritually speaking, so serious was the fall of Adam, that it took thousands of years of preparation for mankind to receive the Messiah, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And those who were spiritually aware and awaiting Him, joined chorus with the heavenly host to Glorify God in the highest, readily recognizing and accepting His peace and love. This is the peace of those who believe in the Savior. This is the peace of those in the Church of Christ.

The others, the pharisees, sadducees, and scribes, who knew the words of the prophesies of the Old Testament, but not the spirit thereof, saw Christ fulfilling all of the words of the Old Testament in a spiritual manner, preparing people for the Kingdom of God. Thus, fulfilling the words of even the last prophet, the Prophet and Forerunner, John the Baptist, saying: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2) Yet, these "learned leaders" refused to listen to the Forerunner, and rejected the Messiah.

The Old Testament Law gradually taught the virtue of restraint, or self-denial – “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” - to a chosen nation still spiritually hindered by its past fallen nature. Fulfilling the Old Testament, Christ extends the law to its ultimate purpose, saying: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you....whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (Matthew 5:38-39) Similarly, having given us the Ten Commandments, Christ adds to it the Beatitudes. Thus, preparing for His people the pathway into His Kingdom.

Yet, in spite of Christ’s countless miracles, instruction and example, the eyes of the pharisees, sadducees, scribes, and those with them, were darkened through their own desires. Their jealousy and hatred toward the Son of God led to His crucifixion and death. Thus, repeating the actions of their ancestors against the prophets.

For such, our Savior speaks of a worldly peace, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” (Matthew 10:34) Is this a contradiction to the words of the heavenly host? Not at all. Here our Savior speaks of a peace that is mundane and worldly - an external calm of a temporary nature, often brought about through war and the sword. Christ came to redeem man’s fallen nature, not to continue such false “glory.” Yet, this is the only peace understood, and sought after, by those who rejected and crucified Christ, and those who still live outside the Church of Christ. As we know, this same division continues today, perhaps even to a much greater extreme.

Desiring to join the chorus of the heavenly host singing:” Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men” (Luke 2:14) as a way of life and path to salvation, “loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind.... and our neighbor as ourself.” (Matthew 22: 37-39), we must strive to overcome the divisive sins of this world rooted in jealousy and pride.

As Orthodox Christians we are as pilgrims on life’s journey to our Heavenly Kingdom, the Kingdom of God. We are in this world, but not of this world. Through the feast of the Messiah’s Holy Nativity, His life of instruction, His crucifixion and Holy Resurrection, our Savior has fulfilled the prophesies of the Old Testament, and redeemed our fallen nature, establishing His Church as our Ark of Salvation, which sustains our spiritual growth through its Sacraments and prayers, guiding us towards His Kingdom. Amen.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

+ *Victor,*

*Bishop of Boston and the Americas*