

19/12/2024

His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden's Archpastoral Encyclical 2024 on Christ's Nativity



To Their Excellencies the Ambassadors and Honorable Consuls of Greece and Cyprus,

Reverend Clergy and Fathers,

Members, Benefactors, and Supporters of the Missionary Work of the Holy Metropolis of Sweden and All Scandinavia,

Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“Christ is born; glorify Him! Christ from heaven, go to meet Him!”

Christ, through His incarnation, offers Himself to all of us. This is a gift that God has

bestowed upon humanity. There is no greater gift to compare with this. At the same time, He showed us the path that leads to deification and communion with Him and with our fellow men.

Saint Cyril of Alexandria uses the example of the manger to remind us of God's love for mankind, saying that when the time approached for Christ to take on flesh, man had become dehumanized, as materialism, violence, ignorance, and exploitation prevailed.

Just as the irrational animals find their food in the manger, similarly, Christ was given as food within the manger. Therefore, when people approached the manger, instead of finding fodder, they found the God-Man our Lord as the Bread of Life.

By delivering the Sacrament of the Divine Eucharist to His disciples, and through them to all of us, Christ continues to extend Himself; that is, to be consumed without being exhausted, granting those who partake of this Sacrament the blessing of sanctification and immortality.

In our troubled world, where we receive daily reports of the emergence of new war zones and international disorder, the message of Christmas regarding the triumph of peace becomes the preeminent and most desired event.

Threats from powerful nations that spend billions annually on state-of-the-art weapons systems, coupled with threats over the use of nuclear weapons, bring turmoil, despair, and hopelessness to our world.

Let us pray to the Lord, who deigned to be incarnated as an infant, to illumine the minds of leaders across the globe, so that we may celebrate these blessed holidays in peace, glorifying the Newborn God of love, hope, peace, and justice.

Christmas, my Brothers and Sisters, is an experience and a way of life. It is the reminder of the Event that God became human to give man the opportunity to become god by grace. It is also a call for humanity to turn our entire existence into a manger, where the newborn baby Jesus may dwell.

This feast of our Lord, as a way of life and tradition, is not confined to the decoration of a tree or the exchange of gifts, the treats, carols, or general emotional fervor of the season. It is the prayer we shall offer and support we shall extend to our suffering fellow men and women, who are undoubtedly our "other self/alter ego." Moreover, they are Christ Himself, Who takes the form of the poor, the marginalized, the persecuted, the helpless, and those who had the misfortune of finding themselves caught in the throngs of war, of spiritual or material

impoverishment.

Let us become the Good Samaritans, the staff and support for our brothers and sisters living in need and sorrow. Let us be their Christmas, their comfort, their hope, and their joy!

With heartfelt paternal wishes for a blessed Christmas and Theophany,

† Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia

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