

His Beatitude Onuphry addresses the faithful with a Christmas Message



If we seek God in simplicity and humility, then the Lord will send His Angel or His star to each of us, which will lead us to Christ, the Primate noted.

The Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry of Kiev and All Ukraine, addressed the flock with a Christmas message, said the [Information and Education Department of the UOC](#).

Below is the full text of the message of the Primate:

Primate's Christmas Message

To archpastors, pastors, monks and all faithful children of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church

Christ is born, glorify Him!

I heartily congratulate all of you: God-loving archpastors and pastors, pious monks and nuns, dear brothers and sisters, faithful children of our Holy Ukrainian Orthodox Church, on the great peace-saving holiday of Christmas in the flesh of the Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Lord, by His grace, enabled us to once again celebrate this great and joyful holiday.

The Feast of Christ's Nativity is the feast of the Incarnation, in which we remember and prayerfully glorify the wonderful and joyful event of the coming into the world of the Son of God, our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"The Word became flesh," says the holy Apostle John the Theologian, "and dwelt with us, full of grace and truth, and we saw His glory, glory, as the Only Begotten of the Father" (John 1, 14). People on earth saw the Word, which was first with God and which was God (John 1, 1-2), and which took upon itself human nature and became Man, so that we, sinful people, could again be made innocent and pure God's children.

What a great honor was bestowed upon us, fallen people, through the union in Christ of our human nature with the Nature of God. Now our human nature, that in Christ, is seated in heaven at the right hand of Heavenly God the Father. Even the holy angels do not receive such honor. And all this was presented to us, people, not for the sake of our merits or virtues, but for the sake of great Divine mercy.

In spiritual life, there is a law according to which God's power and might are revealed where there is awareness of human weakness and powerlessness before God, and the Divine mind and wisdom are revealed and made obvious where there is innocent simplicity.

The Son of God, who is the Word of God and God's Wisdom, takes upon himself human flesh, is born in a squalid Bethlehem cave and reveals himself to simple shepherds who had innocent simplicity in themselves. This innocent and pure childhood simplicity made the shepherds able, in the Divine Infant, entwined and lying in a manger (Luke 2, 12), to see the Messiah, the Lord of the visible and invisible world, the Savior and Redeemer of the human race.

The understanding of the power and might of God and our human weakness and powerlessness before God made the Wise Men of the East able to see a wonderful star and realize that the Strong and Mighty God had come into the world.

History says that the Wise Men, who are also called kings, did not come from one country, but from three different countries: Persia, Arabia and Ethiopia. All of them,

independently of one another, were engaged in the study of heavenly bodies, and to all of them, independently and separately, a wonderful star appeared and led each of them from his country to Bethlehem. On the way to Judea, they met and already together came to Bethlehem. In Bethlehem, in a cave, they found the God-child of Christ and bowed to Him as King and God, laying their gifts at His feet: gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Wise Men presented the gold to the Divine Infant Christ as a sign that Christ is the King of kings, incense – as a sign that Christ is the High Priest of eternal blessings, and myrrh – as a sign that Christ, the Divine High Priest, will sacrifice Himself for the salvation of us, sinful people.

The Scripture interpreters say that a wonderful star appeared in Heaven on the day of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and shone in Heaven for nine months until she brought the Wise Men of the East to Bethlehem, to the blessed cave where the Savior of the world, Christ, was born. The men came to Bethlehem on the very day of Christ's Nativity. So the Lord wisely arranged everything with those who had sought Divine Wisdom.

We, modern people, sometimes ask ourselves this question: if we lived during the time of the Nativity of Christ, would the Lord reveal to us this Mystery – the Secret of His coming into the world – the way He revealed it to the shepherds and the Wise Men?

He would open it, if we, as the latter, sought God in simplicity and humility.

Gospel shepherds were not quite ordinary shepherds. They grazed those animals that were intended for sacrifices: these animals, on certain days and holidays, were sacrificed to God, as a symbol of the great Sacrifice that God had to bring for us. The shepherds knew about this. They knew that the Messiah would come to the world, Who would sacrifice Himself for the people, and looked forward to Him.

The Wise Men of the East also sought Divine Truth, which, although in a very distorted form, was still preserved among the Gentiles, and according to which the Liberator was to come to the world, who would deliver mankind from evil, so they also expected It.

Therefore, if in simplicity and humility we will seek God, our Creator and Savior, who has already come into the world and accomplished the feat of our salvation, even today the Lord will send His angel or His star to each of us, which will lead us to Christ the Creator and Redeemer.

As an angel, the Lord can send us either a god-wise priest or a god-loving monk, or a pious lay person who will guide us on God's way, on the road that leads a person to God; and as a star the Lord gave us all conscience, which is the voice of God in our souls and which, like the once Bethlehem star for the Wise Men, directs us to

God, to Christ; we only need to look at our star, i.e. to pay attention to our conscience and force ourselves to obey it.

Wonderful and fascinating about the Nativity of Christ is that the Son of God came into the world through the Most Holy Virgin. St. John Chrysostom says that as Adam, without a wife, brought Eve into the world, so the Blessed Virgin, without a husband, gave birth to the Savior. Moreover, Adam remained intact after taking a rib from his body, while the Blessed Virgin remained imperishable after the birth of the Divine Infant Christ.

Once again I heartily congratulate all of you, dear brothers and sisters, on the Nativity of Christ, on the great Mystery of the appearance of God in the flesh (1 Tim. 3, 16).

These days, we rejoice and humbly thank our Savior for the fact that He, our Lord Almighty, by His inexpressible love for us, sinful and fallen people, came into the world, took upon us our human nature, purified, sanctified and saved it .

On the blessed Christmas night, the Angels were singing the wondrous song: ““Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” (Luke 2, 14). Today we especially pray and ask the Lord that the peace that the Lord brought to earth in His Christmas, which was chanted by the holy Angels, can rest in our hearts, in our families and throughout our blessed Ukrainian land. May the Lord bless us all with peace. Amen.

Humble

+ Onuphry

Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine

Nativity,

2019/2020

Kiev