

19/12/2018

Encyclical of Metropolitan Sotirios of Toronto for the Nativity of Christ



CHRISTMAS 2018

*Reverend Fathers,
Honourable Presidents and Esteemed Members
of our Community Councils
Philoptochos Societies, Teachers, Students and Youth
of our Communities, and to all the Plenitude of our
Holy Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada)*

Christ Then and Now

Christmas Encyclical

By Metropolitan Sotirios

Despair is everywhere. Deep darkness envelops the entire earth. A black veil

covers everything. There is no hope.

Some voices are heard. The prophets of Israel and the wise men of Greece cry out. The prophets say: the Messiah is coming. He is the Redeemer. He is the Savior. And the wise men explain: If the mighty will not descend from the heavens, there is no salvation.

The Messiah came. He is the Son of the Virgin. The God-Man Christ. The only Redeemer and Savior of the world.

He requested a place for lodging and we refused Him. We did not recognize Him. We forced Him to be born in a manger for animals. He did not take offense. He did not hold it against us. He came for a purpose. To redeem and to save.

We humiliated Him. We flogged Him. We mocked Him. We made Him wear a scarlet robe. We raised Him on the cross. We crucified Him.

He forgives us even from the cross. He prays, **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”**

Today, after two thousand years, where do we stand? Not in such a good place. It is a pity. The God-Man Christ came. He taught the truth. Eventually the truth of Christ prevailed over almost the entire world. And now?

The Christians have abandoned Him. They have turned against Him. They do not understand that they are returning to the darkness. To the pre-Christian era. They think they have become wiser and smarter than God Himself. They try to demolish God, and to put man in His place. Surely they are being led to their own destruction. Do we need to say more? No. No more needs to be said.

You and I, who celebrate the birth of our Christ as Christians, let us reflect on the following. How Christian are we? To what extent do we apply the Messiah's commandments? How often do we think about life after death? How much do we care for our family? Are our children Christian? Do we practice our faith correctly? What kind of Christians are we? Hot, cold or lukewarm?

My beloved Christians, live your faith. Do not be fooled by the bells and whistles of the world. Salvation is something unique. It is Christ Himself. At His birth this year, place Christ deep in your heart. Live the mystery. Adopt a true spiritual life. Live out the end of this year with true repentance, by returning to Christ. Begin to live the New Year with Christ in your heart. He is your only redeemer and savior, but also the Redeemer and Savior of the entire world.

“Christ is born; glorify Him! Christ is come from heaven; go and meet Him!”

With fatherly love and blessings in the Newborn Christ,

METROPOLITAN SOTIRIOS OF TORONTO

Head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Canada

