25/12/2018

Pastoral Letter of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church on the Nativity of the Lord 2018

Please find below the pastoral letter sent by the members of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church on the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord 2018.

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“Today is coming about an unheard of mystery –
God becomes man and the nature is renewed.”

(Stichera, Tone 8)

Beloved in the Lord children of our Holy Church,

The church service is abundant in praise songs that reveal the eternal, intransient and salvific truth. A truth that for more than 2000 years has been revealing the

meaning and purpose of the wondrous and salvific act of the Incarnation of God. More than 2000 years ago the angels sang the wonderful song: “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will toward men” (Luke 2:14), and this song never fades away in our church services.

The Nativity of Christ is an unheard mystery that renews the human nature and the whole created nature; a mystery that was pre-heralded to our first fathers (Gen. 3:15). The God-chosen men from the Old Testament Israel were eagerly expecting the fulfilment of this promise. And today we bow to the Great Mystery of piety: “God was revealed in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16).

The days of the long-awaited Nativity of the God Child have been completed and already “God is with us” (Is. 8:10). Our hope (1 Tim. 1:1) took away every sorrow and despair. The unfathomable darkness was taken away, because today have risen the eternal light and that is why our joy is full and the whole Church triumphantly exclaims: “Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the Light of wisdom!” (Troparion of the Nativity of Christ, Tone 4).

Generously lit up by this spiritual light, we again and again bow to and glorify the boundless love of God, because the Son of God became Son of Man for us and for our salvation, to sanctify the fallen human nature by giving the chance to the believers to restore its initial beauty, and as our Orthodox divine service reminds – „the image having fallen before” (Troparion, Tone 2). Incomprehensible for the human mind is this act of God that was accomplished through the Incarnation of our God and Creator Himself.

More than two millennia have passed since the Nativity of Christ and the Church reminds us that we, as faithful Orthodox Christians, have to be “children of light, and children of the day. We do not belong to the night, or to the darkness” (1 Thess. 5:5). We know that the outward form of the world is fading away (1 Cor. 7:31), but the Eternal Kingdom of God with our loving Heavenly Father is in store for us.

Lord Jesus Christ lived among the people and left for us His salvific teaching and gave us a worthy example of sacrificial love, that is why on the day of His Nativity, together with the angelic hosts again and again we sing and glorify the All-Merciful God, and from the bottom of our hearts we exclaim: “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will toward men!” (Luke 2:14).

Beloved in the Lord,

The Nativity of Christ breeds in our souls ineffable spiritual joy, which gives us

strength and hope to overcome the challenges of our time. Lord Jesus Christ shows us the only way of salvation, from which not to stray “to the right hand or to the left, that you may be wise in whatsoever you may do” (Josh.1:7).

That is why on this holy and most glorious day our holy Orthodox Church appeals to us, following the example of All-Generous and All-Merciful God, we also generously to open our hearts and do everything that is according to our powers and abilities so that among us there is no one who is lonely and hopeless. Today Christ the Saviour and the Lord was born for all of us, Who by appealing to us to stay firmly in our faith, teaches us: “You are the light of the world” (Mat. 5:14).

We greet all our spiritual children within the borders of our Fatherland and abroad with the glorious holiday of Christ’s Nativity and we fatherly wish them health, spiritual success, peace in their families, schools, state institutions so that there is more kindness, patience, goodwill and love.

May the grace and peace of the Godly Child born on this day and the joy in the Holy Spirit be with us all!

HAPPY NATIVITY OF CHRIST!

HEAD OF THE HOLY SYNOD
† NEOPHYTE
PATRIARCH OF BULGARIA
METROPOLITAN OF SOFIA

MEMBERS OF THE HOLY SYNOD:
† METROPOLITAN IOANIKIY OF SLIVEN
† METROPOLITAN YOSIF OF USA, CANADA AND AUSTRALIA
† METROPOLITAN GRIGORIY OF VELIKO TARNOVO
† METROPOLITAN IGNATIY OF PLEVEN
† METROPOLITAN GAVRIIL OF LOVECH
† METROPOLITAN NIKOLAY OF PLOVDIV
† METROPOLITAN AMVROSIY OF DOROSTOL
† METROPOLITAN ANTONIY OF WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE
† METROPOLITAN YOAN OF VARNA AND VELICKY PRESLAV
† METROPOLITAN SERAPHIM OF NEVROKOP
† METROPOLITAN NAUM OF ROUSSE
† METROPOLITAN CYPRIAN OF STARA ZAGORA
† METROPOLITAN GRIGORIY OF VRATSA
† METROPOLITAN DANIIL OF VIDIN

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