

24/12/2020

Orthodox Metropolis of Korea - Christmas Message 2020



Beloved Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

The grace and infinite mercy of God has blessed us to celebrate God's descent to earth this year as well, during which "the Word became flesh and dwelt in us." (John 1:14)

Human pride, which had brought humanity to despair, forced the Messiah to come into the world in ways of extreme humility. The cave, the manger of the animals, the poverty, the refuge, the passions, the humiliation of the crucifixion, were all endured by the God-man in order to help the wounded and fallen man realize that only through deep humility will he rise and be saved. "Christ condescended once to become a human being, using all the lowly elements. And He did this in order to trample on human pride." (St. John Chrysostom, ЕПЕ. 6, 16)

For this reason, Christ comes and "dwells" only in the heart of a humble person. Only "the poor in spirit" gain the gifts of His Love. God who is "rich in mercy" (Eph. 2: 4) enriches us not with His wealth, but with His inexplicable "emptiness," with His incomprehensible poverty. He gives the "orthodox enrichment of theology" not to the worldly rich, nor to the powerful and wise of this world, but to the "fishermen of the Spirit," to the humble and pure at heart. St. John Chrysostom comments poignantly on this incomprehensible mystery. He says: "Christ emptied His glory, so that you might become rich, not with His wealth, but with His poverty. If you do not believe that poverty is the cause of wealth, think of our Lord, and you will have no doubt. Because, if He had not become poor, you would not have become rich. This is the amazing thing, that poverty has generated wealth." (St. John Chrysostom, ЕПЕ 19: 454)

"O Christ, what shall we offer You for your coming on earth as a Man for our sake"? We have nothing to offer you, but the crumbs of our weakness. Lord, as a loving Father you asks us: "Child, give me your heart" (Prov. 23:26). You are not asking for something external, e.g. our money, our belongings, but ourselves. You ask for the center of our psychosomatic existence, our heart, with its passions and weaknesses, in order to purify and sanctify it. Yet we, alas, repeatedly refuse to answer the redeeming call of Your unspeakable charity!

Lord, you stand outside the door of my heart and knock like a beggar. If I open to You, I know that You will enter, as you promised, and You will dine with me. I know very well that You will not have any requirements. You will dine with whatever I offer You, as long as it is taken from the essence of "my crushed and humble heart" (Psalm 50:17). And You will remain in me forever, as long as I ask You with all the warmth of my heart: Lord, stay with me.

My beloved, as we are spending this Christmas in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, let us consider how many times the celebration of Christmas has passed, without us living and experiencing with deep awareness the truth that Christ comes "to save humanity, whom He created as Philanthropos, as the God

who loves humankind.” How many times have we failed to make the necessary effort to protect ourselves and to put on a fight against the terrible virus of sin?! How many times have we approached the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist without repentance and a crushed heart?! How many times have we allowed selfishness and ego to destroy our love for God and our neighbor?!

Let us, therefore, humble ourselves sincerely before Him and with repentance let us ask Him to come and be born and dwell in us.

On behalf of His Eminence Metropolitan Soterios of Pisidia, our Clergy, the Faithful, the newly-Illumined, the Catechumen and our collaborators in the Lord, I pray that you all will celebrate Christmas in good health and that our Lord Jesus Christ protects you from COVID-19. Have a blessed Christmas together with your loved ones!

With much love and honour in the Incarnate Christ,

+ Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea

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