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A Christmas message from Elder Ephraim, Abbot of the Holy and Venerable Great Monastery of Vatopedi





**In Vatopaidi
Christmas 2020**

The divinely-inspired wording of the Gospel *'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us'* incorporates the whole of the meaning of the inexpressible and mighty Mystery of God's Providence, that is, His incarnation and our deification.

It is well known that, when the first of our race were yet in paradise, they were deceived by the cunning enemy and disregarded the divine commandment, with the result that they were stripped of their Grace-given adoption and likeness of God. But the God of mercies and loving-kindness, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, *was unable to bear the sight of the human race under the tyranny of the devil* and wished to return us to the initial beauty of our soul. He therefore descended from the heavens and entered the blessed womb of the spotless, ever-virgin Mary, donning our flesh and becoming human for our sake.

At this feast of Christ's Nativity, we humbly pray that the rich mercy of God will come upon all of us and that, in accordance with His irrefutable promise, we may become His children and share in His inheritance throughout eternity.

We therefore remain your humble servants, with great love in Jesus Christ incarnate.

The Abbot of the Holy and Venerable
Great Monastery of Vatopaidi

and my brethren in Christ