

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Christ is Born! *Glorify Him!*

Nine months ago, during the grimness of the Great Fast, the darkest time of the year in the life of the Church, we experienced a glimmer of light that gave us a brief glimpse into the unfathomable Brightness that was yet to come. We, who are God's own creation, on that day were prepared to leap for joy, and to celebrate the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery, for The Son of God became the Son of the Virgin. Now, on this day, exactly nine months later, amidst the coldness and darkness of winter, when the days are short and the wind is cold, we realize the fullness of that Light, the Brilliance which we were promised to behold.

*Today*, the "Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One!"

*Today* God, the Saviour of our souls, has appeared in the flesh!

*Today*, the Light of Light, Brightness of the Father, has made the whole creation shine with joy!

*Today*, Christ has appeared on earth *for our sakes* as a man!

Beloved, these words, taken from the hymns of the Church, reveal to us the inexpressible depth of the theology of our Orthodox faith. Such richness, such profoundness, is given to us to behold, to proclaim, and to try and comprehend in our paltry and limited way. Let us stop, for a moment, and reflect, to strive to imagine what we are saying when we sing these glorious hymns. We say that *God Himself*, the uncreated Son of the Eternal Father, the unconquerable King of Glory, One of

the Holy Trinity, in His extreme and unfathomable love for us, took our flesh, our nature, as *His very own*, not in any kind of theory, not in any kind of illusion, but in all actuality, in true physical reality, to lift us up to the height of His Glory! How unimaginable, how incomprehensible, how awesome this thought really is! We need not look beyond the many fights fought over the years in the Church about our understanding of Our Lord's incarnation to see that we, in our limitedness, could not begin to understand the enormity of its meaning. St. Athanasius described this mystery most concisely and most eloquently, saying: "God became man so that man could become god."

Our Lord's Nativity began His life on earth as man, what some of our Christian brethren call "the greatest story ever told." Indeed, His coming into the world changed the world forever, for it provided us not only the example, but the means, by which we too could walk a blameless path *in communion* with our Creator. Through Jesus Christ we are able to know God, to taste and see that the Lord is good. Through Jesus Christ, death has been destroyed by death, and eternal life has been bestowed on us all. Through Jesus Christ, our own humanity is elevated to the Glory of Our Lord, for He suffered, died, rose from the dead, and ascended to the Right Hand of God the Father *in our flesh* as His own. Through Jesus Christ, in His most holy incarnation, is the fullness of our creation in His image realized, for through His condescension to take our nature as His own, we too can be deified.

Today, the glorious feast day of the birth of Our Saviour in the flesh, is our celebration of the revelation of this awesome and glorious mystery, the miracle of God become incarnate, to all of creation. This revelation is manifested to creation through a single event that follows, yet at the same time also defies, the laws of that creation. A little child, which was conceived, nourished,

carried, and nurtured in the womb of a woman, is born in a manner like any other man to show that He, which is born, *is truly man*. Yet, this Child, which was not conceived in a manner like any other man, for He is born of a virgin, in the miracle of His seedless conception reveals the mystery of His becoming *Son of God in the flesh*. Therefore, beloved, today we can say that we've become witnesses to the incarnation itself: a virgin gives birth to her Son, Who is fully God and fully man, Christ in and of the two natures, Our True God, and Saviour of our souls.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Christ is born! *Glorify Him!*