

# **PASTORAL LETTER 2013**

## **NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

Dearly Beloved Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics and Devout Faithful of our God-protected Episcopate:

### **CHRIST IS BORN! LET US GLORIFY HIM!**

By God's grace, we have come to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks be to him!

Christmas is an invitation to us to come to the manger wherein rests the infant Messiah and to make ourselves to be like little children. It is a time of the year when the words of the Cherubic Hymn that we sing during the Divine Liturgy have special meaning: "Let us lay aside all earthly cares."

Indeed, who has fewer cares than a trusting child? We must also put aside our daily concerns so that, emptied of self and with open heart, we may in fact, "receive the King of all," paying homage to the newborn Prince of Peace, King of kings and Lord of Lords.

Laying our gift of trust in him at his feet, we are immediately rewarded with his blessing on us, the blessing of Hope. Without hope, man is devoid of a purpose to live, of a future, of a tomorrow. Hope is something positive, the possibility of change, and this, for the better.

Alone, man is unable to overcome the world; but in Christ, all things are possible. Every philosophy, every human plan or scheme is nonsense unless based on the truth which radiates from the Christ child in the cave.

By his life and teaching, the Lord Christ has lifted our spirits to the heavens by telling us that he came to give us life and life more abundantly. This abundance is not a quantitative one but qualitative, of true value, which held good for our fathers, for us and for the generations to come. Regardless of the times, the government or powers that be, God's values are forever.

These lasting values, that the world was created good by God and that man, every human being, is made in his image and likeness, are made known to all who accept the Lord and put their trust in him.

This trust in the Savior refreshes us daily, renews us, lifts our hearts from our daily cares and quickens our bodies. Thus, every minute of each day is precious, because it is an opportunity to bear witness to him by our own words and actions. We thereby urge others to come with us to the cave, to believe and trust, to have hope and press forward, fulfilling this life and preparing for the continuation of our existence in eternity.

All mankind mystically approaches Bethlehem, running to follow the rays of the God-sent star, to bask in the resplendent light radiating from the child in the cave. National boundaries and races all disappear in the penetrating, searching, probing, revealing illumination beaming forth from that shelter in the earth. At his side, we are united with our loved ones: both those near and those far; those on earth and those in the bosom of Abraham; those into whose eyes we can see, and those whose gaze we can only recall; those whose hands we can grasp, and those whose hands we can only remember. Yes, the entire Church from all time kneels in adoration with the angelic host at the foot of the Lord, the infant Messiah.

Dearly Beloved:

Let us be glad and rejoice in this day, for a new earth and a new heaven are ushered in! Our hope, indeed, is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Christ is born, and hope is renewed!  
Christ is born, and darkness is dispelled!  
Christ is born, and we are saved by faith!

+ NATHANIEL

**By the grace of God and the will of the people,  
Archbishop of Detroit and The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America**