



NATIVITY EPISTLE

Of the Ruling Archbishop
of the Western American Diocese ROCOR

Reverend Fathers, Venerable Monastics,
and Pious Faithful

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

On this day of exceeding joy, I greet you all and congratulate you with the Great Feast of the Nativity of Christ. We have, by God's special mercy, been blessed with the gift of life and divine sustenance, that once more we may celebrate His birth in the flesh and join the angels, the shepherds, and the host of saints and pious faithful before us in lifting up our voices to sing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill among men!" (Luke 2:14).

When the Venerable Simeon the prophet beheld the incarnate Christ with his own eyes and held Him in his arms, he cried out "mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of Thy people, Israel" (Luke 2:30-32), and our Mother Church calls us to behold the newborn Christ with that same sense of wonder. We must not forget the words of the prophet. We have lived through another year of turmoil in the world, with terrible earthquakes, fires, and floods that have plagued our land and brought grief and struggle to so many; but "our eyes have seen Thy salvation." The world has suffered from political and social turmoils that leave man feeling ever more isolated and alone; but the salvation we have found was "prepared before the face of all people," meant to touch and heal each of us. And though life often feels dark, we have found "a Light to lighten the Gentiles"—every race, every culture, every person, and every situation.

Christ is born into this world, and our hearts brim with joy, for we see the race of man, so lowly, united to God Who lifts him up out of darkness and into eternal life. We rejoice, because God has come to us, and drawn us to Himself. We rejoice, because in a cave, on this day, salvation itself came into our world. And so, filled with this joyful spirit and confidence in the power of the Incarnate Saviour, I wish each of you the same wonder and faith that will draw you close to our eternal God, Christ in the flesh, and transform your lives into His everlasting glory.

Conveying to you every blessing from the Newborn Lord,

+ Archbishop Kiril

The Nativity According to the Flesh of our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ
25 December 2017 / 7 January 2018