



My Beloved Ones,

This coming Tuesday, December 25th, all Christians shall be called to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Nativity, and the coming of God's grace in the gift of His Only-Begotten Son. This event is beginning of a new era, as well as the end of an old era.

In this Sunday's Epistle, for example, St. Paul writes to the Hebrews that all the Old Testament Prophets lived in anticipation of the Messiah, our Lord and Savior. We read in the earliest parts of the Old Testament of the special and loving relationship our God had with His creation, but especially with you and me, the human beings. Even after Adam's disobedience, so great was God's love for us, that He was willing to take on the same flesh that He had given to His Creation, without forgoing His Divine Nature. This mystery is not only inconceivable for the

human mind, but humanity cannot begin to imitate the depths of such love; to, as St. Gregory Palamas said, "*honor the flesh*" so that we might once again have the ability to be reconciled with our Creator.

In honoring our flesh, we are faced with another reality of Christ's Incarnation: if the Son of God were only Divine, how could He cure those illnesses that were only earthly? Therefore, the Church Fathers say, that it was necessary that the Son of God should take on our Nature to save us from the first sins of Adam and Eve. If He had taken on flesh with only His Divine Nature, then His example to us would have shown us a human being without God's greatest gift: our freewill. St. Cyril of Alexandria says that Christ had with His person two Natures: The Divine and the Human, "*without mixing or confusion.*" Christ's flesh, though it is from God, is still human flesh, and the *Logos*, the Word, existed with God in the beginning. This mystery is a source of great confusion for many knowledgeable people in today's society, but of course, the key to this mystery, is faith.

For consider that these Natures are from different substances: Divinity and Humanity. Truly then, according to our human understanding, the birth of *Emmanuel* is a great and paradoxical mystery. So too is our Lord's love for His Creation. A modern writer attempted to help us understand this by suggesting that, if a human being was to become a worm in order to save the worms, it would appear to us to be something disgusting, and that he or she was insane. My friends, this is what is happening when the Creator of all things, humbles Himself even to take on the form of a man to save us. This humility is also inexpressible, and not understandable with human logic and behavior.

Such is the love of God: that the Father would give us His Son, and that the Son would obey the Will of His Father, even unto receiving death on the Cross; all in order to save us from the power and punishment of the Devil. All these things God has undertaken for us out of His Love—and yet He does not ask anything of us! He came only to restore to our former position as honored Children of God, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

This Christmas, we can live and experience this event within the sacramental life of the Church, when we ask the Holy Spirit to come upon us, especially during the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy is the greatest gift: the dowry of our Lord's Body and Blood.

This is the way we are meant to reflect and contemplate our God's love for during this special season. Glory be to our God, *"on earth as it is in heaven."*

+ALEXIOS

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