

Nativity Message 2018

“God of Peace, Father of Mercies, Thou hast sent Thine Angel of Great Counsel that we might have peace.”

Fifth Irmos of the Canon of the Feast of the Nativity of Christ

Beloved Fathers and Brothers, Children in the Begotten Lord,

Yet again, the immeasurable Love for Mankind of our All-Good God has deemed us worthy to rise up with festal joy in the early morn, showered in the light of Divine Knowledge, and to celebrate with proper devotion the Birth of our Theanthropic Savior, Jesus Christ. A Feast that shines with joy and inundates our tumultuous world with waves of Divine Love, Peace, and Benedictions!

Glory to His Divine Condescension!

For God is the Father of Mercies, replete with love, forgiveness, and compassion. It was for this reason that he showed his great mercy to the race of man and sent His Only-Begotten Son to earth, in order to confer Peace, being the Wellspring, Bestower, and Guarantor of Peace.

The Son and Word of God the Father is the “Angel of Great Counsel,” as He is described by the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 9:6), for He proclaims and reveals to the world the preëternal, great, and ineffable Counsel of God, His preëternal plan, His Antecedent Will, for the salvation of man, for the Mystery of Divine Providence, as the Mystery of our pacification and of the restoration of our relationship with God.

He who was made flesh and was born “of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary” as a Child in Bethlehem, the Interpreter and Fulfillment of God’s Counsel, the Prince of Peace, the Lord and Messiah Jesus Christ, gives dawn to the light of Divine Knowledge and knowledge of the Divine Will. He dispels the darkness of disbelief, of spiritual delusion, and of sin, throwing down the Devil and restoring Peace. For this reason and it alone, with genuine knowledge of God, love, and humility, do we possess Peace. Only in this manner can we rise up in the glorification of God, in Orthodoxy (proper belief) and in Orthopraxy (proper observance of the Faith), being made peaceful and reconciled to God, bearers and proclaimers of Peace.

The gift of Peace is Divine and is given to those who seek it: “O Lord our God, give us peace” (Isaiah 26:12). Our Lord is He who casts aside the enmity of man towards God, giving pardon where there is repentance, which reconciles earth and Heaven, which dispels antipathy and hatred between persons, bringing their relationships into harmony, and which proffers inner peace to every person as joy and as unity in mind and heart.

“For he is our peace” (Ephesians 2:14), having, indeed, bestowed it with the seal of the Cross and Resurrection, and He gives Peace, not as the world understands it, but His own Peace: that which

conquers fear and turmoil (St. John 14:27) and brings about union in a manner befitting Him as God, overcoming every obstacle.

But where is there “peace on earth,” which the Holy Angels proclaimed and glorified on the Eve of the Nativity of the Divine Child? What takes place and what predominates within us and around us?

What we ascertain is grim: that nearly everywhere there are turmoil, conflict and warfare. We find them in the hearts, minds, and relationships of people in the world and, unfortunately, sometimes even in the Church.

As long as personal whims, egotism, spiritual delusions, the indulgence of passions, unlawful pursuits, betrayals, hostilities, and hatred predominate, there is not to be found reconciliation with God, and thus Peace cannot exist or prevail. Wherever true belief in God, the Truth, and, as well, the fear of God, compliance with His holy Will, and reverence for the Hierarchical order of His Church according to Divine Tradition are absent, there God is absent, and justice and love are missing, for such people “have not known the way of peace” (Romans 3:17). Thus it is, too, that we so frequently encounter disturbed individuals, full of confusion, incoherence, hardness of character, and turmoil. This explains such derangement in souls, in thoughts, and in society within the world. And even in the Church, the refuge and harbor of Peace, certain hapless people torpedo the divine and inestimable virtue of Peace with bizarre new ideas and fallacious constructs from their darkened minds and their troubled hearts, thinking in their foolishness that they serve justice and truth in this way! It is our duty to confront resolutely every challenge, remaining undisturbed, as servants of the true Peace of Orthodoxy, which—as St. Theodore the Studite says—overflows with Peace.

Beloved Children in the Lord:

No matter what occurs in our lives and in the progression of the Church, let us repeat with the Psalmist: “We will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea” (Psalm 45:3). Let us taste from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Guarantor of Peace, the sweetness of His Peace, by way of His Holy Mysteries, with peace of conscience and virtuous hope of victory and participation in the eternal Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

Feast of the Holy Nativity 2018

The Holy Synod