

December 20, 2020
Protocol 12/106



To the Venerable Hierarchs, Esteemed Clergy, Reverend Monastics, and Beloved Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Brethren and Blessed Children in the Lord, on this the glorious and light-filled Feast of the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, I greet you with the words that resound throughout our Churches and homes during this season: Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

By the grace of God, we have come through an extraordinary year fraught with challenges and trials that none of us could have expected. We have found ourselves confused, scared, and anxious. As we realized the frailty of our earthly life and the many fleeting things of this world to which we so often cling, more than anything, we have found ourselves in need of a Savior.

It is especially in these challenging moments that we are strengthened by God's promise, spoken in the book of Deuteronomy, "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be in dread of them: for it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you (Dt 31:6)." As children of God, as children of the promise, we should remain steadfast in hope. We should never let our hope waiver, because, as the present feast reminds us, we are strengthened continually by the presence of Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus, who saves us from our sins and weaknesses, and reconciles us with our heavenly Father. The scripture, hymns, and rites of the feast testify that Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, is He who has also died on the Cross, and become the first-born of the dead, raised us all by the Power of God, and opened the gates of the kingdom to us.

The great Prophet Isaiah, speaking of this kingdom, tells us:

Metropolitan Tikhon, Primate

Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever (Is 9:7).

Beloved hierarchs, clergy, monastics, and faithful, let your hope be renewed at the Nativity of Christ! Be assured that God is with us! Perceiving the mystery of this feast, difficulties and trials in this life will become bearable, as your faith is strengthened, and your hope remains firm.

With all the blessings of the feast, I remain

Sincerely Yours in Christ,



+ Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada