



December 25, 2019/January 7, 2020

To the beloved clergy, religious, and faithful of the Russian True Orthodox Church Archdiocese of North America--mercy, peace and love be yours in ever-greater measure.

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great Light!” This short verse that we sing during the Great Compline for the feast of the Nativity succinctly and eloquently sums up the mystery that is before us today.

Christmas is a contrast between dark and light that reveals itself in so many ways. In the darkness of night, a star leads us to a new day that has dawned upon the world and filled it with light. In the darkness of the cave, the

most radiant of events took place. In the darkness of a world that had been held captive by sin, Christ is born to free humanity and restore the beauty of creation.

This season puts joy in the hearts of young and old as we remember the immeasurable gift that has been given to us. All around us lights shine in the night as a reminder of the Light that has come into the world. People even shine a bit brighter during this time of year as smiles seem a little easier to come by and kind words are spoken more readily.

Today, perfect love has broken through time and space to dwell among us. Today, Christ enters the darkness of the world, the very opposite of who He is, to give us the light of His presence. Today, Christ enters our lives that have been darkened to reveal to us the path to salvation by His light. Today, Christ enters the brokenness of our lives and, once again, makes us whole. Today, Christ enters the world white as snow so that we put the darkness of the past behind us.

As we pause to give thanks this day, let this not be a once-a-year event. Let us strive to have our hearts filled with joy and light each and every day. May the Light that shines upon us today from the newborn Savior guide our thoughts and actions throughout the rest of the year.

With the bestowal of my archiepiscopal blessing upon you, God’s people, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

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Metropolitan and First Hierarch of the
Russian True Orthodox Church-MM