

December 25, 2023/January 7, 2024



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

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

In recent weeks, Bethlehem has been on the hearts and minds of people throughout the world for reasons that bring sorrow to those around the globe. Today, however, Bethlehem is in our hearts and minds for reasons of joy, as we celebrate God himself coming into human time and dwelling among us.

But we who celebrate today with such solemnity have to ask ourselves do we do it all just to remember an event in some faraway place, or is there more to it? Where exactly is Bethlehem for us? Did the Son of God come to be born in a tiny village in a faraway land, or was he born there that he might come to be born somewhere much closer and more personal? If Christmas is the time that God chose to come close to us, then Bethlehem must also be somewhere very close. And the fact is that indeed it is. Bethlehem is right here in our hearts because this is where the Savior wants to be born today. This is where he wants to make His dwelling and bring new life to us each and every day. If Christ is born in Bethlehem and not in our hearts, then we've missed the whole meaning of Christmas. Christmas is the time when God's great love for us was shown in his coming to live among us, and it's the time when our love should be shown, not just in the giving of presents, but in the giving of ourselves in love and friendship to others, in showing that Christ lives within us not just today, but throughout the year.

Today, as we celebrate the birth of our Lord, let us invite Him to live within us. Let us invite him to take his place on the throne of our hearts and reign there forever.

May the peace and joy of Christmas be with you today and throughout the coming year and may we all share in the joy and the knowledge that God is with us.

With the bestowal of our blessings and prayers for all of you, we remain

Sincerely in Christ,

+ALEXY

Metropolitan and First Hierarch of the True Orthodox Church of the Diaspora
Archbishop of Minneapolis

+HARALAMPOS

Archbishop of Dallas and Texas

+NICHOLAS

Archbishop of Edenborn
Vicar for the Archdiocese of North America & the Diaspora