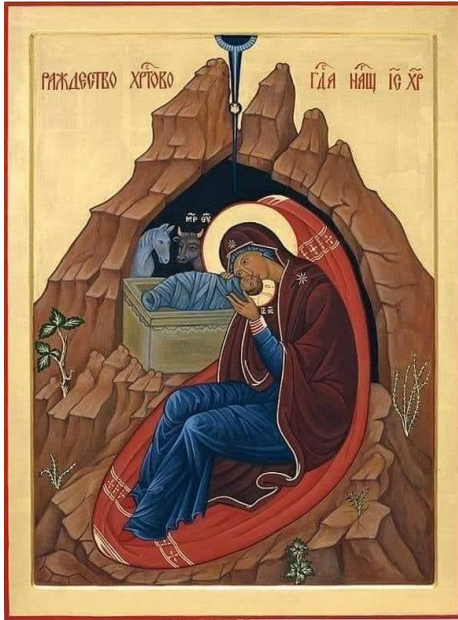


December 25, 2024/January 7, 2025



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

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

O Hope of the Fathers and Expectation of the People, through Your birth You have given us hope. By the sweetness of Your hope, You have drawn the shepherds, the magi, and all who believe in Your holy name to give the adoration that is due to You. We implore You, through Your pure nativity to keep us, by Your grace, from attachment to earthly things, from false reliance on our personal works, and from unnecessary worries. May we rely only on Your fatherly direction and Your divine providence. Draw our hearts and minds to contemplate on heavenly gifts, so that we may place all our desires only on them.

-Christmas Prayer from the Syriac Tradition

The Christmas season is a time of joy and wonder. It's a time in which, for a brief moment, we can forget about the cares of the world and return to the innocence of childhood, regardless of our age. It's a magical time often spent with family and friends that somehow seems to allow us to forget about everything else going on around us. But sometimes the real reason for everything we do can get lost amid all the celebrations, and shopping, and dinners, and presents. The above prayer helps to put this feast into clear focus and reminds us that everything we celebrate was given to us as a gift. It was the love of a Father that allowed His Son to break into human time to save us from ourselves and guide us back to Himself.

He came into a world desperately in need of love and light to give hope to its people. He comes to us again today with that same light and love, to give hope to a world that is still so desperately in need. People today, perhaps more than ever, are often filled with worry. They fear for the future. They set expectations that are often so hard to fulfill. They are burdened by weights that sometimes seem too heavy to bear. But the good news that the Nativity of Our Lord brings is that there is always hope. We have the hope and the knowledge that we don't have to go through these times and these worries alone.

Today, we're asked to give our fears, worries, struggles, and doubts a rest and place our hope and our trust in the Newborn Savior who has come into the world to be our constant guide and source of strength. This doesn't mean that everything will always work out for us the way we want or plan, but it will work out in a way that will lead us to a brighter tomorrow, even if we may not be able to see it today. If we keep our hearts and minds on Him, we'll never be led astray.

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

+HERMOGEN

Archbishop of Odessa and Tavrychesk

+NICHOLAS

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

+ALEXIOS

Bishop of Hazleton and Weatherly

+PHILIP

Retired Archbishop of Philadelphia