



*To the Priesthood, Monastics, and all the sons and daughters
of our God-preserved Diocese of Canada: grace, mercy, and peace from
God; the Father, and Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.*

NATIVITY, 2016

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Lk. 2, 10-11)

Dear brothers and sisters,

with these words the angel of God revealed to the world the greatest day in the history of mankind; not only the greatest to the present, but until the end of the world. The descendants of the first man, Adam, waited for this day. Prophets of the Old Testament foretold of Him, the righteous sighed with hope, all awaiting the One who will wipe away the tears from their eyes. (Rev. 7, 17) And when the fulness of time came (Gal. 4, 4), the One whom everyone longed, and waited, for had arrived. The Saviour revealed Himself. In the city of David, Bethlehem, the most pure Virgin gives birth to a godly babe. And that silent night, where nobody was outside the city except the shepherds whom were guarding their flock, an angel of God appears specifically to them, and announces the birth of the new Shepherd.

From that event, over two thousand years ago, many generations have passed on this planet made by God. Many changes have transpired. However, not one event has remained as important as today's feast. The Nativity of Christ transcends, and leaves in the shadows, everything which has occurred throughout history. Not one battle, or natural phenomenon, human invention, cultural contribution, cannot be compared to the miracle of the birth of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. For this Child was no regular child, but the Creator, King, and Saviour of the whole world.

Today we see this miracle through the prism of faith. A child wrapped in the clothing of humility and meekness, is in a manger, yet exerts all the glory of the pre-eternal Father. Since then people with different titles have been on this Earth: rulers, philosophers, scientists, poets, artists and plain people. Time has committed them to be forgotten. A mere minority of them is preserved in libraries and archives. Not one birth is celebrated such as that of Christ. Nobody is so loved, even after His death, as He is loved. Take any cross and it will remind you of Him. Not one life is described as is His. Not one book is so widely read as is His Holy Gospel. Not one image is as frequent as icons of Him. And not one depiction is as respected as depictions of Him. Not one person which walked on the Earth was holier than He. All of history is set according to His birthday – before and after Christ.

He, therefore, separates the history of mankind into two eras: the old and the new, or before and after Christ. Whenever we send a letter and scribe the date, or read a daily newspaper, we are to be reminded of Christ. Even those who do not believe in Him, show respect to Christ in this way. All of this confirms the words of the Holy Apostle Paul that God created all through Him and eternity. (Heb. 1, 2)

Brothers and sisters,

There is a story of a man who, driving an automobile along a highway, was startled to see a big accident on the road. Having parked his automobile, he pulled the heavily injured victim from his destroyed vehicle, placed him in his, and drove to the hospital. The victim, having lost much blood, was in dire need of a transfusion. Unfortunately, there was nobody to match his blood type, except for the very man who drove him to the hospital. The man of course donated his blood, and therefore saved a life. Take a look at the Son of God who became man for this very reason: to give His blood to millions and millions of people; first on Golgotha and then in the Holy Sacrament of Communion. He gave for us, and continues to give, that which nobody has. And nobody will ever be able to give as He, for He is the only one without sin. And he did all of this because he loved us to the end. (Jn. 3,16) Through Him God loves us with an eternal love, for He is love. (1 Jn. 4, 8) This is precisely why God the father sent his Only Begotten Son to the world so that anyone who believes does not perish, but has eternal life. (Jn. 3, 16) "The Creation of the world manifests the great power of God, but the salvation of the world shows us even greater power", says Blessed Augustine. Which slave would dare to tell his master to dress as a slave, or to take his place as a slave? Never mind to give his life for that slave? That which the mind of man could not imagine became possible for all of humanity through God.

Let us rejoice today, dear brothers and sisters, for the heavens and earth rejoice. Let us be grateful to Him for His incarnation, humility, poverty, and tears which He shed for us. Let us greet Christ with all of our being so that heavenly peace may abide in us. Let us ascend with our faith, hope, and love. Know that the living and eternal God is with us; the same God to whom bowed the wise men from the Orient, and the shepherds from Bethlehem.

Make room for Him in our hearts. What do we have from even a thousand births of Christ in Bethlehem, if we do not prepare cover for His holy head in the very hearts he created? Most of all He loves to abide in us. (2 Cor. 3, 3) And when we have Him in us, then we have heavenly peace. He alone is our peace. (Eph. 2, 14)

Let us celebrate today's feast with great joy, for He is the joy of the world and the heavens. The fruits of our celebration should be among us who dare to call ourselves by His name, so that we may live the angelic hymn: "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men". (Lk. 2, 14)

We would like to extend Our utmost gratitude to all of the benefactors of Our diocese, monastery, parishes, or anyone that needed help. May these sacrifices be your gift to the God-child Christ (Mt. 2, 11). We especially appeal you to support us now, in this time of spiritual and material renewal. We hope that you will do this for the Holy Apostle says "we should not be weary in well doing". (Gal. 6, 9)

We wholeheartedly greet you with the feast of the Nativity and wish you a happy New Year with the joyous greetings:

PEACE FROM GOD – CHRIST IS BORN!
HAPPY AND BLESSED 2017!

Your intercessor before Christ the God-child,

BISHOP OF CANADA

