THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

Nativity Message by His Holiness Patriarch KIRILL of Moscow and All Russia



Nativity Message

by

His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus',

to the Archpastors, Pastors, Deacons, Monks and Nuns

and All the Faithful Children of the Russian Orthodox Church

Beloved in the Lord archpastors, all-honourable presbyters and deacons, God-loving monks and nuns, dear brothers and sisters:

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations to you all on the radiant feast day of the Nativity of Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ as I address you with the words of the ancient Christian hymn: “Christ is born, glorify him! Christ is come from heaven, receive him! Christ is on earth, be ye lifted up to him!” (Heirmos of the first Ode of the Nativity Canon).

The Apostle Paul called the event of the Divine Incarnation that had come about “the great mystery of godliness” (1 Tim. 3.16). All earthly wisdom falls silent in awe before this mystery; before it vain human knowledge fades away. This mystery is able to disarm and mollify even the coarsest and stoniest of hearts. Amidst the cruelty and bitterness of this world there is born the One Who can heal all division and grant to us true peace and genuine contentment.

Ever since sin entered the life of people, tragic division has reigned on earth, and the world, torn away from its Maker who is the true Fount of light, inexorably plunged into darkness and chaos. Yet God did not abandon His creation and did not cease to care for it. In patiently preparing our salvation, the Lord became incarnate, entered human history and became one of us. The Son of God became the Son of man, in all things like us, except sin. That sorrowful question which once was heard in the Garden of Eden: “Where art thou, Adam?” finally found its answer in the lowly cave near Bethlehem. “The first man was from the earth, full of dust; the second man is from heaven” (1 Cor. 15.47), as the Apostle Paul wrote. In Christ, as in the new Adam, “God reconciled the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5.19); He renewed human nature by healing it from the wound of sin.

The life of a human being and the life of the whole world is healed only in God. This is the simple yet profound truth to which today’s feast day testifies. How can we not recall here the inspired words of Saint Augustine, who with sacred awe glorified the wise Providence of the Almighty: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you” (*Confession*)! It is only in Christ Jesus that oneness with God and the true meaning of the life of the human person, who from the creation of the world was called to life eternal, are to be found.

The coming into the world of the Saviour is above all the revelation of Divine love for people. A love, which on the one hand is unbounded and all-conquering, and on the other, is meek, “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13.7).

How, then, are we to reply worthily to the great love of our Maker and draw near to Him? We attain and affirm this closeness by following the Gospel commandments, through patience and unfeigned love for one another, but above all through the constant renewal of our oneness with Christ by participating in the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

Today is a feast of hope; a feast of peace; a feast of quiet joy. In glorifying the Born Saviour and greeting him with the beautiful church hymns and songs, let us recall the lofty Christian calling to be the “light to the world and the salt of the earth” (Matt. 5.13-14) and “whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith” (Gal. 6.10). Let us give hope to the afflicted, let us comfort the disheartened, let us share our joy with those near and those afar and help those in need. In acting in this way, we truly become “the aroma of Christ to God” (2 Cor. 2.15) and thereby bring fruits pleasing to the Lord Who has been born.

And to those who by force of various circumstances find themselves beyond the salvific enclosure of the Church and who are not part of the life of Christ’s community, I would like to say: open up your hearts to the One “who so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (Jn. 3.16). Let us, then, glorify the Lord and Saviour for His ineffable mercy and love for the human race.

In congratulating all of you on the feast of Christ’s Nativity, I wish you, my beloved, bodily strength and unfading joy in the Saviour Who has been born. “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 1.2). Amen.

+KIRILL

PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUS'

The Nativity of Christ

2025/2026

Moscow

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Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/93907/