

## **Nativity Epistle 2020**

*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. 4. 4-5).*

By His ineffable and inscrutable providence and love, the pre-eternal Son of God descends from heaven and, for our salvation, becomes incarnate in the womb of the most pure Virgin. Without ceasing to be perfect God, He becomes perfect man.

Almost the whole world, even that which does not consider itself Christian, celebrates this event. For the majority, it is just some kind of carnal and commercial bacchanalia celebrated by partying and feasting with an excessive consumption of food and drink, and the exchange of gifts, where the central place is occupied not by the Divine Infant, but by Santa Claus. If this is what our celebration is limited to, then this year, because of the epidemic which now rages worldwide, we will be deprived even of that.

As Christians, however, we should know from the Apostle Paul, *that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39).* Indeed the pandemic has deprived us of much, but it could not, cannot, and will not deprive us of Christ.

It has taken friends and family from us. Here in Latin America, because of it, we Orthodox Christians, and especially our brother Serbs, have lost the spiritual guidance and earthly support of our apostle, our luminary, our spiritual beacon of light, our beloved Metropolitan Amfilohije, but in him we now have a heavenly patron and intercessor. He was born on the feast of the Nativity and lived his life by Christ's Gospel. Spiritually he lived the mystery of Bethlehem; his heart was truly a field of Bethlehem, where angels of the Lord proclaimed glad tidings of man's salvation; it became the grotto of Bethlehem, where the Son of God is born and worshiped; it was truly God's habitation, where the newborn Christ continued to abide and act. His life and actions bore witness to this fact, shining like the star of Bethlehem, and drawing all, like magi, to the newly born Son of God.

The Newborn Divine Infant calls us also, to partake of this great mystery, and in this life to abide in Him, and in eternity to receive the salvation to which He now comes to call us.

People of God, *Christ is Born!*