



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON
ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΒΟΣΤΩΝΗΣ

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2021

Among all other feasts in the Church's calendar, it is Christmas alone that has won the hearts of people of all faiths and even those of no faith. Whether religious or secular, people around the world are celebrating some version of Christmas. We can understand the universal appeal of Christmas if we pause to reflect that at its heart lies the undeniable miracle of life itself - the birth of a human being. The birth of a child is always an event that brings joy. Holding a newborn baby in one's arms cannot but inspire in us not only kind feelings of tenderness and care but also *a sense of wonder*. At Christmas, as we are beholding this newborn baby lying in a humble grotto, we are encouraged to reflect upon this mystery that is the birth of a new, unique human being who opens its eyes to the light of the world for the very first time. In doing so, however, how can we fail to think of all those children who continue to be born today in great poverty? How can we fail to think of those children who, in the absence of a loving parent to provide them

with the care and attention that they need, do not manage to survive? How can we fail to think of all those babies who are rejected even before they are born, those to whom this very gift of life has been denied? How can we fail to think of the families who have been longing for a long time for the joy of a child but who do not see their hope fulfilled?

At Christmas, however, we do not commemorate the birth of a human being in general, and we do not celebrate the mystery of life as if this were some philosophical, abstract idea. At Christmas we commemorate something very tangible and important for all humanity, something essential for Christianity, a truth that the Gospel summarizes in these few words: “The Logos [Word] became flesh” (John 1:14). This was a historical event that the evangelists were concerned to situate within well-defined historical and geographical coordinates --- when Caesar Augustus was reigning over the world and Quirinius was the governor of Syria (Lk. 2:1-30). It was, therefore, on a specific night in history that the event of salvation as foretold by the prophets and expected by Israel took place --- the Creator of the universe became Himself a creature! He united Himself

indissolubly with our human flesh so that He who is "Light of Light and true God of true God" became at the same time truly a Man, a Man who carries upon His shoulders our history, who takes away our sins, and, who has lifted our frail human nature and all our suffering to God's throne. This Logos who became flesh is not, therefore, an abstract idea, a universal law or some impersonal power. Rather He is a Person who knows us, calls us, and guides us. He is the Son of the living God who became man in Bethlehem. "Christ is born, glorify Him!" [Χριστός γεννᾶται, δοξάσατε!] Let us experience the joy of Christmas and feel the presence of the Newborn Savior in our hearts.

With Hierarchical Love,

† Μετροπολίτης Μεθυσίου

M E T H O D I O S

Metropolitan of Boston