

ENCYCLICAL
for the Feast of the Nativity of our Savior Christ

,βια' • 2011

Participation in the Mystery of Divine Self-Abasement

The Eucharistic and Kenotic Ethos of Orthodoxy

Χριστὸς Γεννᾶται! Δοξάσατε! • Καλὰ Χριστούγεννα
Christ is Born! Glorify Him! • Happy Christmas

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Today—and especially today—we participate in the Feast of Reconciliation: the things of Heaven and the things of earth embrace one another, giving each other the kiss of love and conciliation.

Glory to God! The Love of the Father, the Grace of Christ our Savior, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit are now with us and vouchsafe us to live in the Light of the Holy Trinity.

The Righteousness of God, in His Condescension and in the outpouring of His Mercy upon our fallen nature, already opens the gates to the Mystery of the Cross and Hades, to the Glory of the Resurrection and Pentecost.

Stable (Σταῦλος) and Cross (Σταυρός)! Utmost poverty and extreme humility. The Lover of our souls becomes incarnate: “He Who is full empties Himself,” that we might partake of His “fullness.”

Christ, by His Incarnation, becomes poor today in the Stable of Bethlehem, albeit a King, so as to descend tomorrow to Hades “marked by wounds,” yet “All-Powerful,” that He might “fill all things” with His resurrectional Love.

Our Lord, as Servant and Minister, reveals to us the entire depth of our existence, since He is ultimately our true self; it is to Him that all of our sighings and expectations are lifted up; it is He Who guides us to the discovery and realization of the Image of the Trinity within us; it is He Who discloses to us the Mystery of our Christification and Trinitification, for where the Son is, there too is the Father, there too is the Holy Spirit, the one and indivisible Godhead.

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My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Glory to God for all things! “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory.” And we receive His exceedingly radiant and God-befitting Glory when we partake of His Body and Blood.

The Word became flesh, became man, and His Body became—and remains—the Church, so that through It mankind might share in the Mystery of Self-Abasement, of the Stable and the Cross.

Through self-abnegation in Christ, through the unlading of our egotistic self, we permit our Lord to fill us with Himself and to guide us from self-abasement to renewal.

A kenotic outlook on life is the ethos of Orthodoxy. Ministry to our brother with a self-sacrificial disposition and humility, the renunciation of self-justification, the Eucharistic awareness that life and all things are gifts of the Love of Christ—all of these lead us to renewal and to the freedom of the children of God. Then it is that we have the power to humble ourselves, to love, to be filled with Him, and to be enriched by His Uncreated Glory.

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May the prayers of our much-revered Elder, Metropolitan Cyprian, through the intercessions of our All-Immaculate Lady, the *Theotokos*, strengthen, guide, and protect us in our sacred endeavor to participate in the Mystery of Self-Abasement, in the adoption of a Eucharistic and kenotic attitude, as a mode of existence, unto the glory of the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen!

+ The Holy Nativity of Our Savior Jesus Christ, 2011

Your humble intercessor before our Incarnate Lord,
† Bishop Cyprian of Oreoi,
Acting President of the
Holy Synod in Resistance

N.B.: The Reverend Parish Priests are asked to read the present Encyclical immediately after the Holy Gospel for the Divine Liturgy of the Nativity, December 25, 2011, according to the Orthodox Church Calendar (January 7, 2012, according to the secular calendar).

* Translated from the original Greek at the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery.