

**Archpastoral Letter
for the Feast of the Nativity 2013**

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord
Wednesday, December 25th, 2013

Dearly Beloved of Our Diocesan Family:

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

“When the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive adoption as sons ... Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

(Galatians 4: 4-7)

One blessed night two thousand years ago, an event planned from all eternity took place: the All-Powerful God became a helpless Child. In the stillness and obscurity of the little town of Bethlehem, the Lord of Glory came to earth to reveal Himself to men. Think of it! Man was able to see and touch and kiss the very face of God! People were able to know and experience and love the Lord as they never could before! Immanuel was really here: *God with us!*

But, the Son of God came into this world for more than the “awesomeness” that the Incarnation means. He came with both a message and a mission. His message was indeed a powerful and timeless one for each and every one of us. He came to tell every human being: *“I love you ... I forgive you ... I give you eternal life.”*

Is this not what He meant when the Bible tells us that He said: *“Greater love than this has no one, that he lay down his life for his friends ... you are My friends ...”* (John 15:13-14). *“Your sins are forgiven ... that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins ...”* (Mark 2:5,10). *“I am the Resurrection and the Life ... he who believes in Me, even if he dies, yet shall he live and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die”* (John 11:25-26).

Christ also came with a mission -- to prove to men that these words were really true. He would spend His entire earthly life enduring poverty and homelessness, rejection and loneliness, misunderstanding and betrayal, mockery and persecution, pain and suffering, so that whoever among us would face these same difficulties would know that Jesus has already experienced them as one of us, to show us how great His love for us really is! The Messiah would give up His life voluntarily for us -- shed His very blood on the Cross for us -- endure death itself for us -- for *“without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins”* (Hebrews 9:22) -- that we could have the assurance of forgiveness and the possibility of salvation. And, Our Savior would rise on the third day to prove that He is truly the Son of God, become *“the first born from the dead”* (Colossians 1:18) and open to us the gates of Heaven, so that *“those who believe in Him might not perish but might have eternal life”* (John 3:16).

