

**ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE, METROPOLITAN Tikhon
FOR THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST 2014**

CHRIST IS BORN ! GLORIFY HIM !

To the honorable Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and Pious Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Brethren and Blessed Children in the Lord,

I greet all of you with the joy of the most glorious Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ! As Saint Leo the Great reminds us in his sermon on the Nativity, "in adoring the birth of our Savior, we find that we are celebrating the commencement of our own lives, for the birth of Christ is the source of life for the Christian people, and the birthday of the Head is the birthday of the Body."

Indeed, we rejoice and celebrate on this great day. Yet we must never fail to recall those for whom the earthly sojourn seems to be anything but joyful -- the lost and searching and seeking, the lonely and forgotten, the sick and imprisoned and persecuted, the hungry and thirsty, and those who, like the Christ Child, "have no where to lay their heads." If the birth of Christ is the commencement and source of our lives, then it is not only our duty, but our blessed honor, to share the light of the newborn Christ with those who sit "in the valley of the shadow of death," thereby revealing the love God so richly and unconditionally pours out on all who would accept it.

Our Lord proclaimed good news to the poor, gave sight to the blind, and healed every manner of infirmity. How well we know the spiritual poverty and blindness and infirmity that fills our world today. And how crucial it is to be continuously reminded that "with God, all things are possible," (Mt 19:26) precisely because "God is with us" (Mt 1:23) and calls us to become "partakers in His divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4) Even our most seemingly insignificant expressions of love and compassion for "the least of the brethren" (Mt 25:40) make the impossible, possible and the mundane as miraculous as the divine birth we celebrate today.

The angelic hosts called out to the simple shepherds: "Tarry not in the field, O ye that shepherd the nurslings of the flocks! Cry aloud and sing praises, that Christ the Lord hath been born in Bethlehem!" Let us not tarry in singing praises to our incarnate Lord, not only with our voices, but also with our unconditional acts of love and kindness and compassion. Such is the fruit of the good news proclaimed over two thousand years ago. And such is the very heart of our common ministry to incarnate Him in our hearts and our lives, and in the hearts and lives of those whom He continually prepares to encounter Him.

Please be assured of my prayers for all of you, that Our Lord will not only equip us in our common ministry as His Body, but bring our efforts to fruition. May the divine blessing that He so freely brings into the world remain with all of us now and throughout the new year to come!

With love in the New-Born Christ,



†TIKHON
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada