



Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece

Holy Metropolis of Oropos and Phyle



Message

for the Feast of the Nativity of our Savior Jesus Christ, 2017

His Visitation and His Poverty

“He hath visited us”; “He became poor for our sake”

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit!
O Holy Trinity, glory to Thee!

My beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I would like humbly to remind you on this great Day, and especially amid the mystagogical aura of our worship of the Nativity, of a salvific truth.

At every Divine Liturgy we enjoy the honor of being invited to the Mystical and Blessed Table of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to the Eschatological Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

At this Table, it is our Lady, the *Theotokos*, the unwedded Bride, who lays out the Victuals; she it is who provides and munificently sets forth the Divine and deifying Fare; she is the Nourisher of those invited to the Mystical Supper of Life, offering forth the Flesh and Blood of Her Son, our God.

In the Divine Liturgy, we invoke especially the intercessions of the *Theotokos*, making entreaty through the serving Priest, after



the sanctification of the Precious Gifts, with the following striking words: “By whose supplications do Thou, O God, visit us.”

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Yea, my beloved Christians, at every Eucharistic Assembly we ask of our Savior that He might visit us. We ask Him to prolong this, His first Visitation. We seek to take part in that Mystery, so that we might offer Him hospitality as our Great Visitor.

Indeed, we beseech that His Visitation might be unceasing, until such time as we perceive His Presence in our hearts, no longer as a passing Visitor, but as an abiding Householder and our Bridegroom, in an ineffable and eternal bond and union.

Let us never forget this truth: that for us, the pious, this is the essence of the Nativity: the Nuptials of God with Man; the Visitation of the Bridegroom and His union with us; the humble Coming of Christ, Who became poor that He might bestow upon us the incorruptible wealth of His Divinity!

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My Christ-loving Brothers and Sisters:

On this day the Holy Apostle Paul teaches us: “Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich” (II Corinthians 8:9).

And the Saints interpret with such contrition this astounding passage of the Apostle: “Consider, the Apostle says, and reflect well, brethren, on the Great Mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord... Meditate, O Christian, on the Master of all... If He had not assumed the lowly, destitute, and ignoble nature of man and had not undergone all of the other ignominious sufferings for the

sake of us paupers, His enemies, we would assuredly not have been made rich... By what kind of wealth does he say that we have become rich? The wealth of piety, the knowledge of God, and Grace; purification, sanctification, adoption into sonship; the wealth of deification according to Grace; and all of the other good things that He has bestowed upon us in the present life and will bestow upon us in the life to come” (St. Theophylact and St. Nicodemos).



The Saints, in addition, draw to our attention that “the Lord is not only called poor, because He was clad in the poverty of human nature, but also because He lived as a pauper during His earthly life.”

He was born in a manger; He worked as a carpenter “until the thirtieth year of His life, in order to sustain Himself and His Most Holy Mother, who was poor, and to show mercy on the poor”; He had nowhere to lay His head for rest; His raiment was poor; He subsisted from the alms that He received.

And finally, the Saints, filled with sacred inspiration, offer doxologies and praises to our Savior’s ineffable humility in poverty: “Glory to Thee, O our Lord Jesus Christ, for Thou didst exercise such exceeding humility, not only serving Thy Holy Disciples but washing their feet, and enduring sufferings and the most dishonorable death of the Cross, but also plying the carpenter’s trade... Glory to Thine utmost poverty and to Thy Condescension undertaken for our sake” (St. Nicodemos).

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My beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Let us return to the liturgical supplication: “By whose supplications do Thou, O God, visit us.”



The Mystery of the Visitation of God to us is experienced at the same time both personally and collectively, when we partake of the Immaculate Mysteries with suitable preparation.

Twofold love, for Christ and for our brother, urges us to a twofold poverty, that is, to a humble frame of mind and to voluntary privation for by way of almsgiving to our neighbor. In this way our hearts open, that we might welcome our at once great and abidingly awaited, yet penurious Visitor.

“He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him” (St. John 6:56).

On these grounds, there is given to us the most sublime charism of becoming abodes, habitations, and tabernacles of the Glory of the Holy Trinity and of having, as a permanent Householder in our hearts, our Bridegroom Christ.

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May the blessing of our ever-memorable Elder, Father, and Chief Shepherd, Metropolitan Cyprian, by the intercessions of the Nourisher of our Church, our Lady, the *Theotokos*, guide and strengthen us in this sacred endeavor of opening our hearts, so that, moved by love, we might take up poverty and thereby be granted the wealth of deification according to Grace, in Christ our Savior and God. Amen!

† Holy Nativity of our Savior Jesus Christ, 2017

Your humble intercessor before our Incarnate Lord,
Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle