



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 350/2023

**Archepiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of Christmas**

December 25, 2023

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ-loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

Thus says the Lord: a rod shall come forth out of the root of Jesse,  
and a blossom shall rise from that root.

*(Prophecy of Isaiah 11:1)*

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

Although He comes to us in humility, in swaddling clothes and in poverty, He is the powerful Rod of the Root of Jesse. In assuming our human nature from his Most Holy Mother the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, He bears all the suffering and sin of humanity across all the ages. What strength in this Rod! What glory in His powerful love for every creature!

He also comes as a blossom of inner and truthful beauty, to restore our human nature to its original shining loveliness. The Prophet Isaiah says elsewhere, "He had no beauty nor glory..." (53:2), but such was the humility that bowed down the Son of God to become the Son of Man. The flower of His virtues, His sinless life, His sacrificial love, is a bloom that will never fade. The root of His human nature is his Holy Mother, who



bore him in a cave in Bethlehem of Judea. But from this root out of dry and virginal ground, there arose the first fruits of them that slept (I Corinthians 15:20)! For the Lord was born in cave in order to arise from another cave. He was wrapped as an infant in swaddling clothes in order to proclaim His own Resurrection by leaving behind the grave-linens set aside in the tomb (John 20:5). And He was laid in a manger — used to feed the mute beasts of burden — so that we might be fed with His Holy Body and Precious Blood and proclaim Him risen from the dead.

Therefore, my beloved Christians, let us receive this Rod of glory and Blossom of beauty with gratitude and honor. Through his Holy Mother, His human nature is our human nature, and there is nothing that He cannot make whole and pure. Let us worship Him with all our hearts, and minds, and souls.

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

† ELPIDOPHOROS  
Archbishop of America



## ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΗΣ

### ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΙΚΗ ΕΓΚΥΚΛΙΟΣ

Αριθμ. Πρωτ. 350/2023

**Αρχιεπισκοπική Εγκύκλιος για την έορτή τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεννήσεως.**

25 Δεκεμβρίου 2023

Πρὸς τοὺς Σεβασμιωτάτους καὶ Θεοφιλεστάτους Ἀρχιερεῖς, τοὺς Εὐλαβεστάτους Ἱερεῖς καὶ Διακόνους, τοὺς Μοναχοὺς καὶ τὶς Μοναχές, τοὺς Προέδρους καὶ τὰ Μέλη τῶν Κοινοτικῶν Συμβουλίων, τοὺς Ἐντιμολογιωτάτους Ἄρχοντες τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου, τὰ μέλη τῆς Ἡγεσίας τῶν 100, τὰ Ἡμερήσια καὶ Απογευματινὰ Σχολεῖα, τὶς Φιλοπτώχους Ἀδελφότητες, τὴ Νεολαία, τὶς Ἑλληνορθόδοξες Ὄργανώσεις καὶ ὁλόκληρο τὸ Χριστεπώνυμο πλήρωμα τῆς Ἱερᾶς Ἀρχιεπισκοπῆς Ἀμερικῆς.

«Καὶ ἐξελεύσεται ῥάβδος ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης Ἰεσσαὶ καὶ ἄνθος ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης ἀναβήσεται»  
(Ἡσαΐας 11:1).

Προσφιλεῖς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ ἀδελφές ἐν Χριστῷ,

Αὐτὸς ποὺ ἐρχέται ταπεινά, ὡς ἄνθρωπος σπαργανωμένος καὶ φτωχός, εἶναι ἡ πανίσχυρη ῥάβδος τῆς ῥίζης Ἰεσσαί! Προσλαμβάνει τὴν ἀνθρωπίνη φύση μας ἀπὸ τὴν ὑπεραγία Θεοτόκο καὶ ἀειπάρθενο Μαρία καὶ ἀναλαμβάνει τὶς ἀμαρτίες τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, «ἐν δόξῃ, ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν ἀγάπῃ» πρὸς κάθε ὑπαρξη στὸν κόσμο.

Εἶναι τὸ ἄνθος τὸ ἀμάραντο τῆς ἀληθινῆς ὁμορφιάς, ποὺ ἐπαναφέρει τὴν ἀνθρωπίνη φύση στὴ ἀρχικὴ τῆς ὠραιότητά! Ὁ προφήτης Ἡσαΐας ἐπισημαίνει σὲ ἄλλο σημεῖο: «καὶ εἶδομεν αὐτόν καὶ οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλλος» (Ἡσαΐα 53:2), ἀλλὰ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ταπεινώσε ἑαυτὸν γινόμενος υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου. Τὸ ἄνθος τῶν ἀρετῶν του, ἡ ἀναμάρτητη ζωὴ του, ἡ θυσιαστικὴ ἀγάπη του δὲν ἐκλείπουν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. Ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύση του ἔχει τὴ ῥίζα τῆς στὴν Παναγία Θεοτόκο, ποὺ τὸν γέννησε σὲ μία σπηλιά στὴ Βηθλεὲμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας. Ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ αὐτὴ τὴ ῥίζα στὸ ξερὸ καὶ παρθένο ἔδαφος «ἐγήγερται γενόμενος ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων» (Πρὸς Κορινθίους Α΄ 15:20). Διότι ὁ Κύριος «τίκτεται ἐν σπηλαίῳ» γιὰ νὰ ἀναστηθεῖ «ἐξ ἑτέρου σπηλαίου».



Σπαργανώνεται ὡς βρέφος, κηρύσσοντας τὴ δική του ἀνάσταση, ὅταν πίσω στὸν τάφο «τὰ ὀθόνια καὶ τὸ σουδάριον κεῖνται μόνα» (Ἰωάννου 20:6-7). Γεννήθηκε σὲ φάτνη, ἢ ὁποῖα χρησιμοποιεῖται γιὰ νὰ τρέφονται τὰ ἄλογα κτήνη, ὥστε νὰ θρέψει ὅλους ἐμᾶς μὲ τὸ τίμιο Σῶμα καὶ τὸ πανάχραντο Αἷμα του, ὡς ἀναστὰς ἐκ νεκρῶν.

Γιὰ αὐτό, ἀγαπητοί μου χριστιανοί, ἄς προσλάβουμε μὲ εὐγνωμοσύνη καὶ τιμὴ αὐτὴ τὴ ράβδο τῆς δόξης, αὐτὸ τὸ ἀμάραντο ἄνθος. Μέσω τῆς ὑπεραγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας προσλαμβάνει τὴν ἀνθρώπινη φύση μας καὶ τὴ θεραπεύει, ἐξαγιάζοντάς την. Ὅλα ἐξαγνίζονται καὶ ὀλοκληρώνονται. Ἄς τὸν λατρεύσουμε λοιπὸν ὀλόθερμα μὲ ὅλο τὸ εἶναι μας, τὴν καρδιά, τὸ μυαλὸ καὶ τὴν ψυχὴ μας.

Χριστὸς γεννᾶται· δοξάσατε!

*† Ὁ Ἀμερικῆς Ἐλπιδοφόρος*

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