

Nativity Epistle
of His Eminence
Archbishop George of Sydney,
Australia & New Zealand

Nativity of Christ, 2025/26

“And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2: 8-14).

***Beloved in the Lord, Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful
of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese!***

Once again we hear the message of the angelic host, God’s messengers to mankind, as they announce the glad tidings of the Birth of Christ our Saviour, Emmanuel, Who has become incarnate in order to free mankind from the bondage of sin. The incarnation of Christ, the God-man, is the fulfilment of the promise made by God to Adam in the Garden of Eden, that the offspring of woman would crush the serpent’s head, which was the first promise of the Redeemer. Throughout the many centuries of the history of mankind we see that God has often taken an active part in our salvation, especially in the New Testament, sending His angels to guide us, protect us, and teach us how to live and how to worship God. We see how they took a very active part in the events surrounding the birth of Christ: guiding the Magi to the cave in Bethlehem, warning them not to return to Herod, announcing the birth of the Saviour to the shepherds and glorifying God, warning Joseph to flee to Egypt and then not to return to Bethlehem but to go to Nazareth. Later in the New Testament we see that angels came to minister unto Jesus after He was tempted in the wilderness after His baptism and in the garden of Gethsemane after the Mystical Supper, and that they rolled away the stone from the sepulchre and announced Christ’s resurrection to the myrrh-bearing women.

When we read the Lives of the Saints we see many examples of how, throughout the centuries since the Birth of Christ, angels have continued to guide mankind on the path of salvation, protecting us from the wiles of the Enemy, teaching us how to praise and glorify God, just as they did over two thousand years ago in the hills near Bethlehem. Let us hearken to their angelic message, and let us make every effort to worship and

glorify God every day of our lives. In this way we will bear witness to the presence of Christ in our hearts, Who was incarnate for our salvation. We must not be distracted by the crude consumerism and materialism of the worldly festivities in society, but rather we should focus on the spiritual aspects of the Feast and the Church services. Try to attend the festal services, both leading up to the Nativity and afterwards so that you can receive the spiritual nourishment which the Holy Church offers us, so that you can truly understand the Feast.

May the blessings of the Newborn Christ be with you now and throughout the New Year!

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

**+Archbishop George of Sydney
Australia and New Zealand
of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia**

