



The Most Glorious Nativity of the Mother Of God

“Today She is born from the chaste Joachim and Anna, and Adam’s curse upon us is destroyed by Her birth” (stichera for the Vigil).

For five-and-a-half thousand years mankind subconsciously awaited this moment. All that while it could not find in its midst a maiden worthy of becoming the Mother of God incarnate; humanity was unable to produce a Chosen One Who could contain within Herself the Uncontainable.

All spiritual things were foreign to antediluvian mankind. In those days people were so incorrigibly flesh-bound that God eradicated them from the face of the earth in the waters of the deluge and planted a new mankind from the roots of righteous Noah. But Adam’s new progeny did not remember for long the reasons for the deluge and began anew to build a monument to its pride. Then the Lord dispersed the people upon the entire face of the earth, dividing them one from another by a language barrier.

Afterwards He found a shoot of future salvation – Abraham, and planted him in fertile ground, grew a mighty tree from him – the people of Israel, guarded them, cleansed them of idolatry, and finally focused all His attention and concern upon one of its branches – the tribe of Judah, and then concentrated upon a small offshoot – the ancestry of David, which gave the world the everlasting Bloom – the Most-pure Virgin. Such was the divine plan for our salvation – from a dying root to produce a bloom of incorruptibility, chosen from among all ages and people – the Most-blessed Virgin Mary.

This wondrous event took place in a small town in Palestine called Nazareth, where an elderly barren couple gave birth to a Daughter. For many of their neighbors this appeared extraordinary, but not more than that. They were unable to comprehend the magnitude of the event. Had their spiritual eyes been open, they would have seen a wondrous sight: the Son of God attending the birth of the Holy Virgin; angels reverently surrounding the newborn Maiden, greater than the cherubim and higher than the seraphim; Adam and Eve spiritually triumphant, seeing the ancient prophecy coming to pass – the birth of a Maiden Whose seed would destroy the head of the ancient serpent (Gen. 3:15). Repentant sinners rejoice, for into the fallen world has come the Surety of sinners, the Intercessor for the damned, the Joy of all who sorrow.

The Mother of God loves and hears all those who pray to Her in the simplicity of their hearts, for “through the doors of Her mercy everyone enters freely with prayer” (St. Dimitri of Rostov).

Let us not pass by this door, dear brethren, by forgetting to pray, and let us not thus send away, as did antediluvian mankind, the Merciful Intercessor from our midst.

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Grant me, O Lord, the power to glorify according to my ability and by the grace of God this great Christian feast – the Nativity of the Most-holy Virgin Mary, predestined by the Creator of ages to be the Mother of the Son of God in flesh.

Mentally I compare the two maidens: the virginal Eve, when she was first created, and the Most-holy Virgin and Ever-virgin Mary, the Mother of God.

The first maiden became the willful cause of universal sin, damnation, death, and all the misfortunes to which we are subjected even to this day and from which we suffer terribly; the second Maiden became, through God's will, the cause of righteousness, blessing, and eternal life, which were showered upon us by God the Word, Who was born of Her in the flesh.

The first maiden was created from Adam's rib for the sake of unity of mankind's provenance from the same blood; the second Virgin – the cause of today's celebration – was born from the faith, ardent prayer, and charity of old and barren parents, the righteous Joachim and Anna, in order to destroy sin, damnation, and death, for God the Word Who was born from Her did eliminate iniquitous sin among the faithful and expelled damnation and death, granting blessing and eternal life instead.

Such are the two antitheses – the progenitor of mankind Eve and the intercessor for Christians, the Holy Virgin Mary! Wondrous is God's Providence in regard to mankind! Wondrous are the righteous people, who engender truth, peace, blessing, and eternal life in the world, and the first among them is the Holy Virgin Mary. Wondrous is also God's mercy towards mankind in restoring it from the Fall. Through Her nativity the Holy Virgin Mary united God the Word with men, made divine our nature that had been rejected because of sin, and led mankind into contact with the angelic, bright, blessed world, thus helping humans become celestial denizens.

Through God the Word's incarnation from the Holy Virgin, mankind became the recipient of countless boons from God, of which it could not even dream while it remained submerged in all the impurities of sin. From the Lord, Who had suffered voluntarily for the sins of the world, mankind received the font of baptism, salvific repentance, the all-enlightening Word of God that instructs us in piety; the Church has been founded, providing sanctified pastors; communion of the Body and Blood of Christ has been given, purifying us of all sin, renewing our nature corrupted by sin, and adorning and making fragrant the humble and believing souls.

Man's salvation has been made dependent upon faith, repentance, and man's good deeds, while without faith in Christ, God's Lamb, Who has taken upon Himself the sins of the world, and without earnest and fruitful repentance it is impossible to be saved; for this reason, too, the faithful have been given an All-powerful Intercessor – the Holy Virgin.

Let us ponder the meaning of our feasts and let us raise our minds and hearts upwards – to God, to heaven, to our homeland on high.

St John of Kronstadt

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