



**Self-Ruled  
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America**

The Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

The Right Reverend Bishop JOSEPH  
*Bishop of Los Angeles and the West*

**To be read from the pulpit and published in the Church bulletin and newsletter**

*“Behold, a strange and most wonderful mystery: the cave is heaven, the Virgin a cherubic throne, and the manger a room in which Christ the uncontained God is laid. Let us, therefore, praise and magnify Him.” (9th Ode of the First Canon)*

**Christ is born! Glorify Him!**

**المسيح ولد ، فمجدوه !**

The Right Reverend, Very Reverend, and Reverend Fathers, Reverend Deacons, and all the Faithful of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West:

I pray that all of you take to heart the message of this most holy and sacred Feast of the Nativity. For this joyous feast bears witness to the Kingdom of God which is coming into this world through the Church, of which all of you are a part. Therefore, all the faithful have been consecrated as a ‘royal priesthood, a holy nation and God’s own people’ (1Pe 2:9). Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, we have been given victory over sin, confirmed unshakable on the foundation of Faith, given grace to bear witness to the Orthodox Faith and to receive without condemnation the Holy Eucharist.

The journey to the Nativity we endure as part of the fast is not unlike those who followed the Star to the manger where our Lord was born. Such a venture was filled with danger, and yet the promised reward, to see the Savior of Mankind, was worth the risk. In this spiritual exodus, we are to prepare ourselves with fasting, prayer and almsgiving that we might be purified of sin in our bodies and minds. If we dare to approach the Incarnate God, then we must be prepared, so that we can receive the Lord with joy and without guilt. Though the secular world assails us along the path to the spiritual Bethlehem, we are afforded this time to make ready for the King of Glory, born in a humble cave, for our salvation.

Assuring you of my love in the Incarnate Logos,

Your Father in Christ,

**+ JOSEPH**

*Bishop of Los Angeles and the West*

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