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HOLY CHURCH OF ST PARASKEVI  
ST BARBARA & ST JOHN THE MERCIFUL  
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# ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΔΕΚΕΜΒΡΙΟΥ PROGRAMME DECEMBER




ΚΑΛΑ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΑ


2024

# ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ ΔΕΚΕΜΒΡΙΟΥ 2024

**Κυριακή 1<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** ΙΔ' Λουκά – Αναστάσιμος Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:15πμ – 11:00πμ

**Δευτέρα 2<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Εκδρομή των Ηλικιωμένων

 **Τρίτη 3<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Πανηγυρικός Μέγας Εσπερινός της Αγίας Βαρβάρας – Ιερουργούντος του Θεοφιλεστάτου Επισκόπου Χώρας, κ. Ευμενίου, 7:00μμ – 8:30μμ

 **Τετάρτη 4<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Αγίας Μεγαλομάρτυρος Βαρβάρας – Αρχιερατικός Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, Ιερουργούντος του Θεοφιλεστάτου Επισκόπου Χώρας, κ. Ευμενίου, 7:30πμ – 10:30πμ

**Πέμπτη 5<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Όσιου Σάββα του Ήγιασμένου – Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:30πμ – 10:00πμ

☞ Μέγας Εσπερινός εις τον εορτάζοντα Ναό του Αγίου Νικολάου  
YARRAVILLE

**Παρασκευή 6<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Αγίου Νικολάου του Θαυματουργού – Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:30πμ – 10:00πμ

**Σάββατο 7<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Αγίου Αμβροσίου, Μνημόσυνο του Γέροντα Εφραίμ της Αριζόνας – Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:30πμ – 10:00πμ

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**Κυριακή 8<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Ι' Λουκά – Αναστάσιμος Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:15πμ – 11:00πμ

**Δευτέρα 9<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Σύλληψις τῆς Αγίας Άννης – Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:30πμ – 10:00πμ

☞ Σύναξη Ηλικιωμένων, 10:00πμ – 1:00μμ

**Πέμπτη 12<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Αγίου Σπυρίδωνος του Θαυματουργού – Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:30πμ – 10:00πμ

☞ Σύναξη Νεολαίας, Παράκληση της Παναγίας και Πνευματική Ομιλία, 7:00μμ – 9:00μμ

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**Κυριακή 15<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Τῶν Προπατόρων, Αγίου Ἐλευθερίου – Αναστάσιμος Ὁρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:15πμ – 11:00πμ

**Δευτέρα 16<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Σύναξη Ηλικιωμένων, 10:00πμ – 1:00μμ

**Πέμπτη 19<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Σύναξη Νεολαίας – Παράκληση της Παναγίας και Πνευματική Ομιλία, 7:00μμ – 9:00μμ



**Κυριακή 22<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Κυριακή πρὸ τῆς Χριστοῦ Γεννήσεως, Ἁγίας Ἀναστασίας Φαρμακολύτριας – Αναστάσιμος Ὁρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:15πμ – 11:00πμ

☞ ΑΓΙΟΝ ΕΥΧΕΛΑΙΟΝ, 6:00μμ – 8:00μμ

**Δευτέρα 23<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Αγίου Νήφων Ἐπίσκοπος Κωνσταντιανῆς – Ὁρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:30πμ – 10:00πμ

☞ ΑΙ ΜΕΓΑΛΑΙ ΩΡΑΙ ΤΩΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΩΝ, 7:00μμ – 8:30μμ

**Τρίτη 24<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** ΠΑΡΑΜΟΝΗ ΤΩΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΩΝ, Ἁγίας Ὁσιομάρτυρος Εὐγενίας – Ἐσπερινή Θεία Λειτουργία του Μέγα Βασιλείου, 7:00πμ – 10:00πμ



**Τρίτη 24<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Η ΚΑΤΑ ΣΑΡΚΑ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΘΕΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΗΜΩΝ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, Ὁρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 9:30μμ – 12:30πμ

*Προ της Γεννήσεως Σου, Κύριε, ἔτρεμαν ἀπὸ κατάπληξη τα ουράνια στρατεύματα, καθὼς παρακολουθούσαν το μυστήριο να ξετυλίγεται. Γιατί Εσύ, που στόλισες τον ουρανό με τ' ἀστέρια, ἔγινες ἓνα μικρὸ βρέφος, στην ευχαρίστησή Σου. Εσύ, που κρατᾶς ὅλο τον κόσμον στα χέρια Σου, ξαπλώνεις σε μια φάτνη, μια γούρνα που προοριζόταν για θηρία. Αυτό ἦταν το σχέδιό Σου για τη σωτηρία μας, και ἔτσι ἔγινε γνωστή η ευσπλαχνία Σου. Ὁ Χριστέ, το μέγα ἔλεος, δόξα Σοι.*

ΑΛΗΘΩΣ ΕΤΕΧΘΗ Ο ΚΥΡΙΟΣ



**Πέμπτη 26<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Θεία Λειτουργία εις τον εορτάζοντα Ναό της Παναγίας Ελεούσας BACCHUS MARSH

**Παρασκευή 27<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Αγίου Πρωτομάρτυρος Στεφάνου – Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:30πμ – 10:00πμ



**Κυριακή 29<sup>η</sup> Δεκεμβρίου:** Κυριακή μετὰ τὴν Χριστοῦ Γέννησιν – Τῶν χιλιάδων δεκατεσσάρων Ἁγίων Νηπίων, Ἁγίου Ἰωσήφ τοῦ Μνήστορος, Δαυῖδ τοῦ Βασιλέως, καὶ Ἰακώβου τοῦ Ἀδελφοθέου – Αναστάσιμος Όρθρος και Θεία Λειτουργία, 7:15πμ – 11:00πμ

## DECEMBER PROGRAM 2024

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December:** 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke – Resurrectional Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:15am – 11:00am

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December:** Elderly Club Excursion



**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December:** Great Vespers of St Barbara – Presided by His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Chora, 7:00pm – 8:30pm



**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December:** Holy Great-Martyr Barbara – Hierarchal Matins and Divine Liturgy presided by His Grace Bishop Evmenios of Chora, 7:30am – 10:30am

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> December:** Devout Father Savvas the Sanctified – Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30am – 10:00am

✚ Great Vespers at the celebrating patron Church of St Nicholas  
YARRAVILLE

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December:** St Nicholas the Wonderworker and Archbishop of Myra – Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30am – 10:00am



**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December:** St Ambrose, 4 Year Memorial of Elder Ephraim of Arizona – Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30am – 10:00am

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**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December:** 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke – Resurrectional Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:15am – 11:00am

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December:** The Conception of St Anna, Righteous Hannah – Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30am – 10:00am

☩ Elderly Gathering and Lunch, 10:00am – 1:00pm

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December:** St Spyridon the Wonderworker – Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30am – 10:00am

☩ Fellowship, Paraklesis to our Lady the Theotokos followed by a Spiritual Talk, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

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**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December:** Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, St Eleftherios – Resurrectional Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:15am – 11:00am

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December:** Elderly Gathering and Lunch, 10:00am – 11:00am

**Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December:** Fellowship, Paraklesis to our Lady the Theotokos followed by a Spiritual Talk, 7:00pm – 9:00pm



**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December:** Sunday before Christmas, St Anastasia Pharmacolytria (Deliverer of Potions) – Resurrectional Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:15am – 11:00am

☩ HOLY UNCTION, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December:** St Nephon Bishop of Constantia – Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30am – 10:00am

☩ THE ROYAL HOURS OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST, 7:00pm – 8:30pm

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December:** EVE OF CHRISTMAS, Virgin Martyr Evgenia – Vesperal Liturgy of St Basil the Great, 7:00am – 10:00am



**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December:** THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST – Matins and Divine Liturgy, 9:30pm – 12:30am

CHRIST IS BORN, GLORIFY HIM  
MERRY CHRISTMAS



**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December:** Divine Liturgy at the celebrating patron Church of Panagia Eleousa BACCHUS MARSH

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December:** Holy Protomartyr Stephen – Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:30am – 10:00am



**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December:** Sunday after Christmas – The 14,000 Holy Infants slayed by Herod, St Joseph the Betrothed, David the King and James the Brother of God – Resurrectional Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7:15am – 11:00am

## **Christmas Edification and Christian Inspiration**

**Archimandrite Zacharias Zacharou**

Life in the bosom of the Holy Church can be likened to a continuous cycle of feasts, that is, of the spiritual commemoration of eternal events. The enemy of our souls, the devil, fights against us by treacherously and relentlessly introducing his own dark thoughts, which are bearers of death. But the Church also strengthens, inspires and quickens her children, by proclaiming the revelation that God brought to earth.

The feasts in general are a sign of the bountiful care of God for man. Every time we celebrate the world-saving events of the divine economy, the pattern of divine life is set forth before us, that is, the incomprehensible grandeur of the incorruptible and humble love of God. In this way a noble desire is stirred up within us to sing a hymn of gratitude to God for the

salvation He has wrought by His ineffable dispensation.

At the same time, however, the feasts constitute a judgment, because they place us before the awesome judgment seat of the love of God. Divine love is so holy, so infinite and blameless, that under its light man is put to shame; he is judged and condemned because he is unable to duly respond.

The feasts of the Lord, as milestones during the year, help us to regain our orientation in life, to remember our calling and our destiny from before the foundation of the world, to acquire 'the mind of Christ', to assume His life. They reignite our living hope, and in this way, they strengthen us in our struggle, because man without purpose and hope, without faith in eternity, is weakened, paralysed, and he disintegrates, losing his identity, so that he is unable to reject the patterns of the world and resist the ruler of this age.

We are on the eve of the great celebration of Christmas. St Ignatius the God-bearer characterises the ever-virginity of the Mother of God, the Birth of Christ and His death as, 'three mysteries loudly proclaimed, though accomplished in the stillness of God'. This feast is indeed a cry of testimony that God 'so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life'.

The same Saint calls Christ 'the word that came forth from the silence [of the Father]'. Christ is the Word of the

Father, because He brought to those born on earth the revelation of God, the knowledge of His love, the example of the way that fallen man may be restored as a son in the House of the Father. But to speak about Christmas, we must go back to the beginning of the relationship between God and man.

### ADAM

The Triune God is self-sufficient and in need of nought. He created the world out of His exceeding love. He created man and crowned him with great glory, setting forth for him a destiny to become not merely an angel, but a son of God by grace. In Paradise, Adam lived in the Presence of God. His attention was fixed on His Countenance. God held Himself forth as a pattern before Adam, and he imitated Him. However, the enemy, the devil, insinuated himself between them.

The extreme arrogance of Lucifer, who wanted to set his throne over the throne of God, led him to his ultimate and irrevocable fall. Since then, he has never ceased to enviously endeavour to lure man into the same fall, by instilling in him the morbid and foolish desire to become a god without God. In Paradise, the wicked serpent first wounded man in his mind by falsely accusing God. He attacked his will and wounded it also, making it weak and feeble. Man accepted the suggestion of the enemy and fell. He came out from the divine Presence, saw his nakedness, and greatly ashamed, he wanted to hide from his Creator.

Ever since then, man's psyche has been enslaved to the law of sin and death, fearing God and constantly drawing back from Him. But God never ceased to pursue His creature with His mercy. From the very first moments of man's fall, God imparted the First Gospel, the strange promise that 'the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent'. And while man has forsaken God, God has not forsaken inconsolable and helpless man. 'God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.' He gave as a prophetic sign His new Name, Emmanuel, God with us.

### THE INCARNATION

'For neither an angel, nor a man, but the Lord Himself saved us.' In a paradoxical way, Holy Scripture uses the same terms in the Old and New Testaments to describe the creation of man and the kenosis of the divine incarnation. God created man 'according to His image and likeness'. But because man failed to render the 'likeness', Christ came in the likeness of man, 'taking upon Him the form of a servant'.

The mind and thoughts of God are different from the mind and thoughts of man. That is why His way appears paradoxical, different. He Himself announces with the mouth of His Prophet: 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.' As St Irenaeus of Lyon observes, the Lord came to earth not as He 'could

have come to us in His own incorruptible glory, but (as) we as yet had no power ...therefore to us, as to babes, the perfect Bread of the Father communicates Himself as milk, for that kind of thing was His human Presence, in order that we, nourished by His Flesh as by the breast, and accustomed, by this sort of milk diet, to eat and drink the Word of God, might be able to retain in ourselves the Bread of Immortality which is the Spirit of the Father.'

Christ did not come to impose Himself on mortal men with the almighty power and radiance of His divinity. He came secretly, through extreme degradation to attract them by His love, divine and supernatural. That is why the Apostle exclaims in awe: 'Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.'

The Cross and the extreme self-emptying of Christ did not only take place on Golgotha and during His descent into hell. They began from the moment when the Lord Jesus, God Almighty, deigned to come to earth and to be made man. Who can measure the infinite distance between the divine height where the Lord was in the bosom of the Heavenly Father and the depth of His abasement when He put Himself beneath every creature? He Who truly Is, Who has the same Essence, the same life, as God the Father 'assumed our vile body'.

'The Word became flesh.' The King of kings was revealed as a weak and defenceless babe. The Creator of all



things, 'Who holds the universe in His hand', was laid in a manger of dumb beasts. The bearer of boundless treasure lived in indescribable poverty. The Lord of heaven and earth was registered as the servant of an earthly king. He Who is glorified by the angels in 'unstilled hymns of praise', was persecuted by men from the very first days of His earthly life. The impassible God became 'the man of sorrows', the 'suffering servant'.

It was in fact inevitable for Christ to suffer on earth, since he was righteous, pure, sinless, spotless and blameless. He revealed the light of holiness in a world that 'lieth in wickedness' and men 'loved the darkness rather than the light' because they were afraid that the depravity of their deeds might be reproved.

Christ was born in the flesh amidst a small people, persecuted and 'stiff-necked', in an insignificant city, Bethlehem, and in the most humble way, because for the Virgin Mary and Joseph the Betrothed 'there was no room in the inn'. He was born as a vulnerable babe, showing that those who belong to Him must become like babes 'in malice', fed with the 'sincere milk' of the 'Lamb and Shepherd' Christ.

The Lord did not recline on a royal couch draped in purple, but in a manger of dumb beasts, thus giving great hope. Indeed, man in his fall became bestial 'like unto the senseless cattle'. But however defiled his heart may be, God does not turn away from him,

but it is His goodwill and good pleasure to lie in the manger of the dumb creature of his soul. It only takes man to turn to Him and humbly seek His help and succour.

### THE NATIVITY

The angels who proclaimed the Nativity of the Lord to the shepherds, gave them as a sign that they would find an infant 'wrapped in swaddling clothes'. The swaddling bands of Christ foretold His burial in the tomb. This infant did not come to earth to live, but to die for the sake of man's salvation.

We stand in awe before the self-emptying and the ineffable humility of Christ, which are presented these days in the readings and hymnography of the Church. But it is not sufficient to marvel at His divine humility. We must also go to worship it. Our call as Christians is to embrace the way of Christ. This is what the Apostle exhorts us to do: 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' Christianity is not a philosophical teaching, but a journey after the Lord, a relationship of love with Him, the 'abundance of life'.

Through the Nativity of God the Word, eternity entered into time. History was split in two, but the thread that connected God and man before the fall of Adam was joined into one. Christ through His Birth, 'from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary', 'made all things new'. He founded a new Jerusalem, where He builds a temple with living stones, with the souls of those who bear His Name. In this temple, His Church,

He planted an unquenchable spring of grace, of sanctification, 'of so great salvation'.

The Lord through His incarnate dispensation accomplished 'the salvific recapitulation of all things'. He marked a new era and wrought 'a new man'. He not only restored the perfection of the First Created in Paradise, but He gave man the potential for a greater measure of perfection, because in His Person the divine and human natures were hypostatically united.

Christ assumed everything human except sin. He suffered His incomprehensible kenosis and the Cross, so that in all things 'He might have the pre-eminence.' He humbled Himself utterly, placing Himself beneath all, taking upon Himself the sin and pain of the whole world. Since then, it is impossible for there to be any fulness of suffering that Christ has not endured. Therefore, no matter how unbearable the trial we are going through may seem, we can always directly refer to the Person of Christ and walk in His footsteps.

The Lord Jesus showed us that the centre of sin is the will of man. He healed it by

completely and voluntarily surrendering His human will to the Heavenly Father. In His prayer in Gethsemane, He said: 'Not my will, but Thine, be done.' Furthermore, on Golgotha He sealed His perfect surrender into the hands of the Father with His holy blood.

Not only was the love of the Heavenly Father revealed to those born on earth in the Person of Christ, but also the Man that God had in mind when He created Adam. St Sophrony observes: 'Christ revealed both the image of the God the Creator and the image of created man, such as he was and ever is in the creative Mind of the pre-eternal Father.'

Christ revealed the ontological depth of man and the fact that the life of each person is inextricably linked to the life of the entire human race. The Lord was born on earth, lived among men, preached the truth of God, suffered, died, descended to the infernal regions, was resurrected, and ascended, having all Adam as the content of His heart. When man becomes an imitation of Christ, when he has Christ 'living and walking' in his heart, he also bears within him all Adam.



Christians often wish during this period that Christ may be born in our hearts. Usually, however, they are unaware that this word expresses a specific truth. What, then, might be the meaning of the apostolic word 'that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith'?

### CHRIST IN THE HEART

Christ came and was born on earth, hypostatically and bodily once and for all, borrowing flesh from the all-holy Virgin. This event is unique and unrepeatable. However, the Fathers preach that Christ can be born in the heart of every man 'in a way which is at once spiritual and substantial'. St Maximus the Confessor writes in relation to this: 'The divine Logos, Who once for all was born in the flesh, always in His compassion desires to be born in spirit in those who desire Him. He becomes an infant and forms Himself in them through the virtues.'

These words are great. They beget gratitude in the depths of the heart and the desire to recompense thanksgiving to God not only for His unspeakable self-emptying during His sojourn upon earth, but also for the fact that He longs to be incarnate in the heart of each one of us. Also, however, there arises the godly concern of how to open and fitly prepare the secret place of the heart, so that the Lord may be made flesh therein.

First of all, Christ is born as a babe in the heart, when man receives the seed of faith. Then, He continues to grow as man keeps the divine commandments – and especially the all-encompassing

commandment of repentance – as he partakes in the Sacraments of the Church and conforms his will to the divine will. As Christ increases in him, so man matures spiritually and increases with 'the increase of God', until he attains 'unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ'.

The acceptance with faith of the word of God crucifies the mind and unites it with the heart. And when the mind is baptised in a heart burning with gratitude for God, the divine Benefactor, man then acquires great boldness in his spiritual struggle. He realises that what appears to the earthly mind as foolishness and weakness is actually 'the power of God and the wisdom of God', life and light. He is nailed to the invisible cross of the commandments, and this cross becomes a conduit that transmits to him the knowledge and life of God.

The example that shows us how to receive Emmanuel, how to acquire the 'young Child', Jesus, incarnate in our hearts, is set forth before us in the Person of the most holy Mother of God, who blamelessly and spotlessly served the work of the divine dispensation for universal salvation. We ought to adorn our hearts with the virtues that adorned His immaculate Mother, her deep humility and thirst for God, her purity and spiritual virginity, her obedience and total surrender to the divine will.

In the beginning of creation, God brought all creation from non-being to being with one word, 'Let there be...'



The all-holy Virgin through the word of Her perfect surrender to God, 'Be it unto me according to thy word,' brought the Creator Himself to earth. The true surrender of man to the will of God accomplishes great and wondrous things in his life. God comes and renders holiness within him. However, in order to surrender to God, man must overcome a great obstacle, his will; he must also reject the delusion that the love of God and the love of the world are compatible.

Our God is a jealous God. He demands the whole heart of man without any division. As He became a stranger upon earth, He seeks for us to also become strangers, to come out of the camp of this world. As He loves in an absolute way, He desires us also to prefer nothing over His love, to love Him 'with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, with all our strength'. Of course, on our own, we are not strong enough either to renounce the world or to love God, but by the cooperation of grace that which is humanly impossible is made possible.

The all-holy Virgin received the Annunciation during her hesychastic seclusion in the Holy of Holies, when she delighted in prayer and in the study of God's word. Therefore, hesychastic prayer makes man the target of God's visitation and clothes him in 'the grace of the glory that cometh from God for ever'. The Lord himself commands: 'Be ye still and know that I am God', indicating that hesychia is the way to the knowledge of God, that is, 'communion in being', ontological union with Him. Hesychastic

prayer is the most powerful cry of man to God, but it is also during hesychastic prayer that God imparts to the heart the most tangible witness of His presence within it.

The period before Christmas is a time to prepare ourselves in hesychia and prayer, so that we can hearken to the word of the manger of Christ that cries in silence: 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live in Him,' and readily respond by sending forth to God hymns of thanksgiving and love.

The Church exhorts us: 'Christ is born; glorify him. Christ is come from heaven, go to meet Him.' At the same time, however, we, her members, realising how 'far from salvation' we are, and that we are more like children of hell than children of God, ask: 'What can we offer Thee, O Christ?' However, even if we have nothing worthy of the Lord, let us at least offer Him our humble thanksgiving in the incorruptible hope that, if the Almighty Jesus, 'the pre-eternal God', became a babe in swaddling clothes, and sacrificed His life for us, how will He not do all things for our salvation? Christ is born. Let us all come to meet Him in our hearts with gratitude. Let it be so. Amen.

