



THE MONASTERY OF SAINT TIKHON OF ZADONSK

175 St. Tikhon's Road, Waymart, PA 18472
(570) 937-4390

Beloved of the Lord,

With the Birth of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, St. Gregory Palamas tells us that we now have perfect equality between heaven and earth for nothing done by God from the beginning of time was more beneficial to *all* or more Divine than Christ's Nativity which we celebrate during this Holy Season.

One of the great mysteries that our Lord reveals to us through His incarnation is our own divinization and precisely the value of our person in Christ and how our salvation is accomplished. To believe in the God-man Jesus Christ is to believe in one's own possibility of sharing in the Uncreated eternal life of God forever. Christ's incarnation reveals man's potential: that he is meant to become the dwelling place and temple of God (I Cor 3:16.)

The greatest lie of our modern age is the deception that Jesus Christ is a mere creature, a good man, but not God. To accept this is to debase the potential in man to embrace the fullness of God's Uncreated life. Our call is "to become partakers of the Divine Nature (II Pet 1:4)." This call is great indeed and its true import is revealed only through the Cross: "If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his Cross."

Christ is "the lamb slain before the foundation of the world". He comes to us again this Nativity to remind us of another world, another way, another life which is eternal that we must make our own before this temporal life ceases. Our call is to embrace eternity which is the deepest need in the human heart. Nothing less than Christ can fill this void. Nothing less than God's eternal existence can answer the question of death and give us life.

The hymns of the feast proclaim: "The middle wall of partition hath been demolished, the fiery sword is removed, the cherubim withdraweth from the gate of life, and I partake of the food of paradise, from whence I was driven away because of disobedience; for the immutable Image of the Father, the Image of His eternity, doth assume the guise of a servant, issuing forth from the Mother who knew not wedlock, without undergoing change, yet He remained what He was before, our true God; and He hath received what He was not, becoming man in His love for mankind. To Him let us cry aloud: O God Who wast born of the Virgin, have mercy on us!"

With thanksgiving to God and to you all for your love for God and this Holy Monastery, let us rejoice again in God's love for us and in this greatest of mysteries of the Nativity of our Lord. Asking God's blessing upon us all during this Holy Season, I remain,

In the new born Christ,

Archimandrite Sergius
Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery