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Office of the Metropolitan

"Today let us all rejoice together..."
(Ukrainian Christmas Carol)

**Christmas Pastoral of the Hierarchs of the Ukrainian Catholic Church
in the United States of America**

To Our Reverend Clergy, Reverend Religious, Seminarians, and Faithful,
Christ is Born!

Once again, we Ukrainian Catholics recall with affection and devotion the Birth of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: and we have seen His Glory, the Glory of the only Son coming from the Father" (Jn, 1,14). Once again, our merciful Lord brings us to the Feast of the Nativity giving us another occasion to greet one another with His praises. Once again we give thanks for you to the Lord God and rejoice with you on this solemn Day.

Christmas is a very visible sign of God's love for us. The cave, the manger, the swaddling clothes - - all these are signs which underline that great love. And the angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will" (Lk 2,14).

Within the bosom of each believer Jesus Christ, the God-Man, seeks a modern-day manger where - - if we allow Him - - He brings the radiance of His Presence and an assurance of His peace that surpasses all understanding. Even in the midst of our hectic lives and troublesome world, we recall the tender compassion of our Father: "God so loved the World that He sent His only begotten Son" to share in our human situation in every way possible, save sin. Not for us, a God who "watches from a distance!" He is our Emmanuel -- "God-with-us" -- who enlightens the world and brings rays of healing for those who receive Him into the manger of their hearts.

The mystery and the miracle of Christmas are unfathomable. Christ-God became also human like us out of love for us. St. Paul the Apostle says "God's grace appeared for the salvation of all people" (Ti 2,11). Jesus Christ is God's great gift to us. God gives Himself and becomes like us. In His public ministry, Jesus taught very clearly that His love is for everyone. As He loved us, so we must love one another, says Jesus.

Christ was born for each and every one of us, so we acknowledge this great grace personally. But Christmas is also for everyone, so we celebrate it communally. Our

Ukrainian Church and nation have developed such meaningful services and traditions to help us celebrate. How sad it would be to miss them. Remember Christmas is always special because on Christmas Eve everyone is involved. The Christmas Eve Holy Supper includes everyone, the traveler is seated with the family, the absent are remembered, even the animals are paid special attention, and in church the "God-is-with-us" lingers with us and soothes our soul. "Today, let us rejoice together."

Let us all rejoice on this great Feast of Christmas. Let us show Jesus our love for being born for our salvation. Make of your life a holy hymn - - a "psalm of thanks" to God for all things by your every word and deed. Do this day by day and you will be able to say ever more sincerely: "Christ is born, let us glorify Him!"

We, your bishops, extend our best wishes to you and to our sisters and brothers in Ukraine and the world over. May the Infant of Bethlehem raise His hands over you and bless you. May the goodness and kindness of the Christ Child fill your souls with new-born love and joy now and in the New Year.

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him!

+Stefan Soroka
Metropolitan-Archbishop of Philadelphia

+Richard Seminack
Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago

+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM
Eparch of Stamford

+John Bura (author)
Apostolic Administrator
of St. Josaphat in Parma

Christmas, 2011