

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
His Holiness Pope Tawadros II
Pope of Alexandria and
Patriarch of the See of St. Mark
The Papal Center



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English

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God, Amen.

At the start of the New Year 2019, I would like to congratulate you on the Glorious Nativity Feast. I wish you all goodness and blessing in everywhere. I send my personal heartfelt greetings as well as those of all the churches in Egypt. I send it to all metropolitans, bishops, clergy, deacons, servants, dignitaries, church board members, and youth, as well as the congregations, children, and all our Coptic churches in all the continents of the world: North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia, and in all places with those who are celebrating the Glorious Feast of Nativity according to the Eastern Calendar.

When God created man, He desired that man be complete, living out a perfect humanity. He bestowed upon him diverse talents. However, man accepted sin, broke the command of God, and lived in darkness. We refer to this darkness as the “spiritual darkness” in which man lived. And after he was created to enjoy freedom, love, and God’s ordinance, man chose to live in idleness, despair, and sin where he lost hope and lived in frustration. From there sin expanded and spread to the entire world. As it is written in the Holy Bible, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). And with the fall of man, creation lost that which was most important, his humanity. And very slowly, through the generations, the love which was rooted in humanity withered away, leaving a void that caused man to be hungry for love. This hunger for love resulted in him living in great emptiness despite great advancements in communication across the world.

What is the remedy?

The remedy is Love. For someone, out of His own love, to come and restore love once more. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was incarnate, as we read in the Holy Bible: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3: 16). The Lord Jesus Christ came to bestow gentleness, kindness, and love. His purpose was to restore man once more to his humanity and there could have been no other way than for God Himself to be with us. So, Emmanuel, “God with us,” and the Word took flesh and dwelt among us.

God did not send an angel, archangel, prophet, politician, or an ambassador, but rather came Himself. He came because God truly loves man, by action and not by word. Therefore, every year we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity, and this occasion is renewed as if we renew the covenant with God, who came out of His love, offering love to everyone.

In the glorious Nativity, we see Him loving the small village of Bethlehem. He also loves the big city of Jerusalem. We see Him loving the forgotten shepherds amongst the crowded world. At the same time, we see Him loving the wise men, those who lived in a place far from Judea and Jerusalem. He loves the poor and orphaned Virgin. And He also loves the widowed woman, Anna the Prophetess. He loves Joseph the Carpenter, the righteous elder, who guarded the mystery of the Incarnation. And He also loves Simeon, the noble elder, who awaited the coming of Christ. For God loved mankind in its entirety, and He came to satiate them from their now absent love. Man needed this love in order to be restored once more to his humanity.

Thus, in the feast of the glorious Nativity, God sends His Love to you and to every being. He sends to you this love and says that God is not far from you. He says to you that God never forgets you. He says to you that God does not hate man; instead, He hates the sin of man. As for man, he loves him. He searches for every being. He came that He may fill you with all hope and joy and give you a voice of exaltation. Through His love, God returns to man his humanity.

Therefore, my beloved in all places, be careful that nothing can dampen the love in your heart. Be mindful that your heart is always warmed with the love that Christ offers you. Know that the current situations we deal with, and the vast modes of communications present in all the world, make it seem as if we live in a small village. Because of the frequent use of devices, the love in man's heart withered and many weaknesses increased before man. His weaknesses in his relationship with others, in his love to others, and in his love for life. We find that the world increases in violence, crime, terrorism, family dysfunctionality, and in various immoralities. All of this happened because of the lack of love in the heart of man. The feast of the Nativity is an opportunity and a message to each one of us to come and be filled of this love. As our Lord Jesus Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

I congratulate you my beloved for this feast and the joy of the glorious Nativity. We remember our beloved martyrs, who are also rejoicing by their presence in Heaven. We remember also those who are injured, and we pray for their healing, for the peace of the whole world, for our country Egypt, for every person, for every church, and for every service. We pray that God sends this joy to all people as the song of the Holy Nativity says: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14).

My greetings and best wishes to all of you. I wish you blessed days in this new year. May the joy of the Nativity fill your hearts, so that you may be able to convey this happiness and love to everyone and to all the communities in which you live. May God bless your lives and bless all the works of your hands. To our God be all the glory and honor, now and forever. Amen.

Ramadas II