



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 578/2025

Archebiscopal Encyclical on the Feast of Christmas

December 25, 2025

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

*Today the Virgin gives Birth to Him Who is above all being
(Kontakion of Christmas)*

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

In the midst of all our Christmas celebrations, it is the hymnography of the Church that always calls us back to the essence of the Feast, so that, as we pause to consider the miracle of the Nativity of our Lord, the wonder of the Angels, Shepherds and Magi might come over us as well. The Birth of the Prince of Peace taking place in the humble cave of Bethlehem, which He shared with mute beasts of burden, is truly a marvel of marvels. For as the Kontakion of Saint Romanos the Melodist affirms, the God Who is beyond every possible conception and category of human comprehension, wills to be born a human being, from the womb of the Virgin Theotokos.

It is an act of God's supreme love for all creation. For as the Evangelist says, God, Who "so utterly loved the world, gave His Only-Begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish, but possess eternal life" (John 316). And it is also an act of the highest love of a human being for God. Because the Virgin was willing to become

the living Temple of God, offering her very body to provide the human nature that would become the Body of God. For nine months, she housed the Lord of the Universe in the Tabernacle of her womb, until the moment arrived for “Him Who is above all being” to come forth into the wounded and fragile world.

As a newborn and vulnerable Babe, dependent in every way upon His Mother and those around her for safety, nourishment and protection, our Lord and God entered into our experience as human beings, so that we might in turn enter into the Divine Life. For each and every one of us now has the potential to bring forth within our hearts, minds and souls the fullness of God, even unto grace upon grace (John 1:16). The fragility of our existence has become God’s own fragility, and His healing Spirit now infuses every aspect of creation.

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, let us embrace the Child of Bethlehem Who is born within us, in the cave of our hearts. He is gentle and humble, and He understands how exposed and assailable our human condition can be — for He endured it with us and for us. Let us bring forth in our lives His many qualities: love, mercy, compassion, equanimity and forgiveness. And as the Virgin watched Him grow within her own womb and throughout her own life, let us also behold the miracle of His Presence within our lives and within our communities, to the honor and praise of His Holy Name.

Χριστὸς Γεννᾶται! Δοξάσατε! Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

A handwritten signature in Greek script, which reads "Ὁ Ἀμερικανὸς Ἐπιτοποφωρος" (The Archbishop of America).

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America