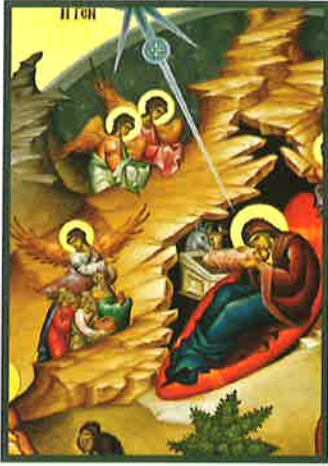


# Christ Is Born!

## "...And the Whole of Creation Rejoices."



*"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us)."*

Dear Parishioners,

Psalm 45, the third psalm read during the first hour of the Royal Hours of Christmas begins the following, "God is our refuge and power; a help in afflictions that severely befall us. Therefore, we will not fear when the earth is troubled,"

What an incredible amount of potential and confidence a person may have when they are aware of God's presence in one's life.

One such person who exemplifies the confidence in knowing that "God is with us!" is St. Nicholas, who is the source of the legend of Santa Claus. While on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the boat on which he travelled was met with a severe storm, which threatened the lives of all the passengers. St.

Nicholas stood in prayer with his hand outstretched and rebuked the storm. The saint new "God is with us!" In another instance, three young men were before the swordsman for execution. St. Nicholas grabbed the hand and sword of the executioner and revealed to the governor who the real culprits were in the crime. The governor repented in tears because he was bribed to sentence the young men to death. St. Nicholas new that "God is with us!" These two examples from the life of St. Nicholas show a man strong in faith, who knew "God was with him" and showed no fear in the midst of great storms and the corrupt power of government.

Over the course of this past year, the earth has trembled, and tremendous tragic events have taken place, such as: Natural disasters like the fires in Greece and California; A pandemic that just will not go away; Torrential rain falls and floods in the United States and throughout the world, due to human kinds addictive consumption that has had a colossal effect on the environment; An attack on the symbol of democracy that has created such insane scenarios that the most stable country in the world seems ready to fall apart.

Comfort! Strength! Solutions! One's confidence will never be fulfilled in fullness, with human institutions. These great characteristics are found in the faith and worship that is rendered to "Emmanuel" (God Who is with us)! God is true power and true refuge.

As the celebration of the birth of Emmanuel approaches, His hope inspired angels to glorify the child wrapped in swaddling cloth in the manger. It is Emmanuel who moved the Magi to travel from afar to offer their gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense. It is He Who brought the shepherds to abandon their flocks and to come and worship the Shepherd of all. The humble and mystical birth of Emmanuel changed the philosophical and logical mind of Joseph to believe in the unbelievable. It is "God Who is with us" that brought Mary to ponder and keep all these events in her heart. May Emmanuel (God Who is with us) fill everyone's hearts with comfort, joy, courage, confidence to meet all the challenges that will come forward in the new year.

Peace! Grace! Mercy! And the Love of God, Who sent His only-begotten Son (Emmanuel), by the power of the Holy Spirit be with you and your family.

In Christ,

*Fr. John Lardas*  
Fr. John Lardas

Christmas 2021