



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

---

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΙΚΑΓΟΥ

Christmas 2022

To the clergy, monastics, and laity of the Holy Metropolis of Chicago. Beloved friends:

Too often, we are inundated daily with negative messages that seek to pin brother against sister; wife against husband; parent against child; humanity against the world. To no surprise, tensions often escalate during solemn and sacred moments. Christmas, the celebration of God's birth and revelation, is no exception.

External pressures have a way of driving wedges between us and those we care about. Often, however, irreparable damage is caused to relationships when such wedges are driven from within our community. Although we enjoy the benefits of a pluralistic society, fundamentalism—especially religious fundamentalism—leads us to fear, belittle, and attack that which is perceived as *other*. Over time, scoffs and sneers transition into criticism and condemnation of anything that doesn't conform to a narrow worldview. Inevitably, such a disposition negatively impacts our own hearts and souls.

The newly celebrated Saint of our Church, Paisios of the Holy Mountain, encourages us to view everything in the world—even that which is different or opposed to our beliefs—within the framework of the Incarnation of Christ. The saint teaches: “As I have come to understand, some people resemble the honeybee, and some resemble the fly. Those who resemble the fly seek to find evil in every circumstance and are preoccupied with it; they see no good anywhere. But those who resemble the honeybee only see the good in everything they see.”

Friends, the birth of Jesus Christ becomes the catalyst for personal and communal transformation. Certainly, that God becomes man is a profound miracle; however, more marvelous than this is that human beings can now become like God. When the Son of God takes on flesh, human nature is deified, the callousness of our hearts is shed, and we can finally see the good in all things. With the advent of Christ, a fly, previously preoccupied with negativity and evil, is transformed into a honeybee. It thus begins to view the world as *very good* (Genesis 1:31); it pollinates others with God's grace; and helps bear spiritual fruit to the benefit of all.

Wishing you all a most transformational Christmas, and a fruitful and productive New Year, I remain

With paternal love in the New-born Christ,

+NATHANAEL  
Metropolitan of Chicago