METROPOLIS OF NEW JERSEY

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

ΙΕΡΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΠΕΤΡΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΥΛΟΥ

"Before your Nativity, O Lord, the heavenly hosts looked with trembling on the mystery and were struck with wonder; for you were well pleased to be born as a babe, you who adorned the vault of heaven with stars; and you have been laid in a manger of animals, you who hold all the ends of the earth in the hollow of your hand; for by such a dispensation your compassion and great mercy have been made known. O Christ, glory to you!"

- Idiomelon from the Royal Hours of the Nativity of our Lord

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christmas is a unique event in our history. Although we may casually think of December 25th as "a birthday" of Jesus Christ, similar to the way each of us has a birthday, this feast is so much more. As the hymns of our Church eloquently say, our God who adorned the heaven with stars chose to be born as a child. He who holds the entire earth in his hand chose to lay in the manger of animals. Christmas is the unique event in which our God, the creator of the universe, made a movement towards his creation. He took this step to draw near to us as an expression of his great compassion and love for us. Therefore, it is only fitting that we answer him. God stands waiting at the door of our heart, and so we must respond by opening the door to him.

As we begin preparing for the celebration of our Lord's Nativity, please consider how you might respond to him. He invites each of us to open the door, to allow him to enter, and to join ourselves to him, celebrating the mystery of Salvation beginning in Bethlehem.

During this festive season I pray that you come to know our Lord Jesus Christ in a deeper and more intimate way, and that you experience the joy and peace that he brings.

With Love in Christ,

Rev. Fr. John Bullock

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