



ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

Prot. no.: 630/2025

Nativity 2025

My esteemed brothers, the right reverend bishops of the Archdiocese,

My beloved sons, the priests and deacons of the Archdiocese,

My children in Christ, the dearly loved in the Lord, the sons and daughters of the Archdiocese,

In these blessed days, the Holy Church reminds us of the great event accomplished by God for our salvation: the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Church calls this feast “the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh.” The emphasis is not so much on birth as it is on the Incarnation. The One who is born is Emmanuel, which means “God with us.” By the birth of Christ, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Let us therefore not be satisfied with the outward expressions of the feast, but enter into its depth and its reflection in our lives and growth, so that we may come to know the “abundant life” which He came to give us.

I greet you on the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, and I pray that your days may be blessed and your lives made holy by His abiding presence within you and among you. I place before you some sayings of the French Orthodox theologian Olivier Clément (+2009), hoping they may help you reflect on some of the essential meanings of the Feast of the Nativity, so that you may live it more deeply.

Olivier sees the Nativity as a call to allow the incarnate Word to dwell within us, so that we in turn may become words of consolation and hope. Thus, the feast becomes more than a season or beautiful rituals; it becomes a daily journey of discipleship, through which the world is renewed from within, the logic of domination is replaced by the logic of giving, and the night of humanity is illumined by a light that never fades.

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

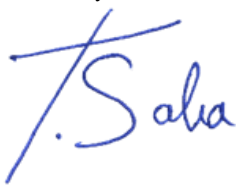
Among his sayings:

- The Nativity is the beginning of the revolution of divine love, in which God enters into human fragility in order to transform it into glory. (*The Song of Tears*)
- God did not come to Bethlehem to assert power, but to reveal a weakness stronger than all power: the power of love. (*The Roots of Christian Mysticism*)
- The Nativity is not an event of the past, but a mystery present at every moment, for God continues to be born in the heart of the one who opens himself to Him. (*The Transfiguration of Death*)
- Christ came so that we might fulfill our humanity in Him, that He might raise it to its full stature in love and freedom. (*The Song of Tears*)
- The Incarnation of Christ proclaims that time is no longer a closed circle, but has become a path to eternity, because God has entered our history. (*The Song of Tears*)
- The cave is no longer merely a place, but the human heart when it opens itself to the presence of God. (*The Song of Tears*)
- In a world consumed by nothingness and despair, the light of the Nativity shines forth to say to us: You are not alone—God is with you, God is within you. (*The Roots of Christian Mysticism*)

On this blessed feast, my prayer for you is that God may remain with you, that you may always be aware of His presence, and that you may respond to Him.

May every Nativity find you in all goodness.

With my love and prayers,



+SABA

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

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