

January 2017



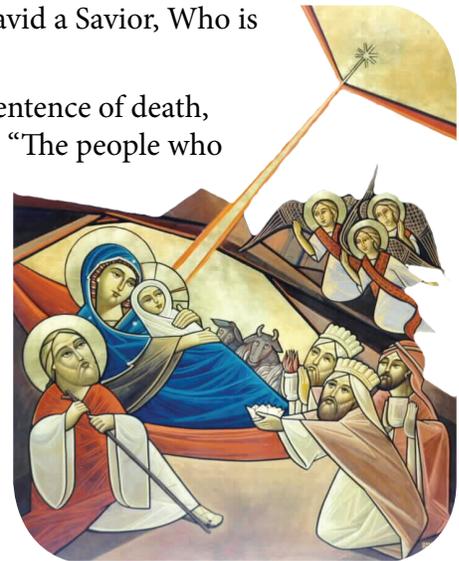
FOR HE WAS OVERCOME BY HIS COMPASSION



My Beloved, the Blessed Children of the Church,

We are joyful and our hearts rejoice, because of the birth of our Savior and Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ. The angel announced to the shepherds, “I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord” (Lk 2:10-11).

God showed compassion on His creation, which was under the sentence of death, corruption, and living in darkness, by shining His true light upon us. “The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned” (Mt 4:16). Thus, in the *Monday Theotokia*, we praise God saying, “For He was overcome by His compassion, and sent unto us His mighty arm” (5th verse). His mighty arm is His Only Begotten Son, “Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power” (Heb 1:3). Also, “all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (Jn 1:3).



Christ came to our world to liberate us from the dominion of death, to grant us life, and to take us out from the darkness to the light, because, “in Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (Jn. 1:4, 5).



My Beloved, today, as we celebrate the birth of Christ, we rejoice, because it is the birth of our Savior. Today, we are joyful, because God had compassion on us and did not want our human race to perish after death took dominion over us. In his book, *On the Incarnation*, St. Athanasius said,

He saw the reasonable race, the race of men that, like Himself, expressed the Father’s Mind, wasting out of existence... He saw how the surpassing wickedness of men was mounting up against them; He saw also their universal liability to death. All this He saw and, pitying our race, moved with compassion for our limitation, unable to endure that death should have the mastery (On the Incarnation 2:8).

St. Athanasius confirmed what the Holy Apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Rom 5:12). God had compassion on our weakness and did not wish us to perish. Therefore, “bow down Your heavens, O Lord, and come down” (Ps 144:5).

There was no other way to save the human race, except through the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Word. Again, St. Athanasius confirmed that,

We have seen that to change the corruptible to incorruption was proper to none other than the Savior Himself, Who in the beginning made all things out of nothing; that only the Image of the Father could

re-create the likeness of the Image in men, that none save our Lord Jesus Christ could give to mortals immortality, and that only the Word Who orders all things and is alone the Father's true and sole-begotten Son could teach men about Him and abolish the worship of idols" (4:20).

St. Athanasius wrote in the same book, "Thus, taking a body like our own, because all our bodies were liable to the corruption of death, He surrendered His body to death instead of all, and offered it to the Father. This He did out of sheer love for us" (2:8).



My Beloved, we rejoice in the birth of our Savior and joyfully receive the Babe of Bethlehem. We rejoice, because our Lord was overcome by His compassion and sent His Son in the flesh to die on our behalf. Let us diligently try to please God by living according to our calling, as we remember the Holy Apostle Paul's words, "He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Cor 5:15).

May God grant us to walk according to His commandments and live a life of holiness, as befitting the children of God, by the grace of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts.

Let us pray for the peace of the Holy Church.

Let us pray for our beloved Father, H.H. Pope Tawadros II.

Let us pray for the families of the 27 Martyrs and the confessors, the victims of the terroristic attack on El-Botrossia Church in Egypt.

Let us pray that God may shine with His light on every soul that is still living in darkness and has yet to know Christ.

Wishing you many happy returns.

Metropolitan Serapion