

**BEGINNING** with the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England in 1558, the Roman Catholic Church and any practice of the faith was strictly forbidden. Some of the various penal laws against Catholicism included the following: The Mass was outlawed. Priests were expelled from the realm, and threatened with the charge of high treason with the punishment of being hung, drawn, and quartered for returning and offering Mass. Any Catholic harboring a priest in the home or allowing him to offer Mass was subject to the same penalty. Catholic citizens were not allowed to vote, to hold property, to be witnesses in court, or to have weapons. Anyone who did not attend Protestant services was fined and imprisoned for repeated offenses. All Catholic schools were closed and instruction in the faith was forbidden. Anyone appointed to a civil office had to take an oath denouncing the Pope and the belief in transubstantiation, thereby in effect preventing any Catholic from such positions. These laws remained in effect until April, 1829 when King George IV reluctantly signed the Emancipation Bill, granting political and religious freedom to Catholics. However, to this day the King or Queen of the United Kingdom cannot be a Roman Catholic.

Please note that these same penal laws were enforced in Virginia until the time of the Revolutionary War. Also, the intensity of enforcement of these laws depended upon the particular reign: for example, during the time of the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell (1642-60), the Puritan Parliament even outlawed the celebration of Christmas.

Therefore, the song The Twelve Days of Christmas was written in England using seemingly secular images or symbols to help catechize children in the faith. The "true love" mentioned in each stanza does not refer to an earthly suitor, but to Almighty God. The "me" to whom the gifts are presented refers to any baptized Catholic. The purpose of the repetition is not only for the sake of pedagogy, but also emphasizes God's continual renewal of His gifts to mankind.

**The partridge** in a pear tree is Christ. In nature, a mother partridge will feign injury to lure predators away from her defenseless nestlings. In the same way, our Lord protects us, vulnerable human beings, from Satan. The pear tree symbolizes the salvation of mankind, just as the apple tree symbolizes Adam and Eve's Fall from Grace.

**Two turtle doves** represent the Old and New Testaments. Also, Jewish couples of modest income offered two turtle doves instead of the customary lamb as a sacrifice to God when they presented their newborn child in the Temple. Interestingly, our Blessed Mother Mary and St. Joseph offered a sacrifice of two turtle doves for the presentation of our Lord (cf. Luke 2:22-24).

Known for their beauty and rarity, **the three French hens** signify both the gifts of the Magi (gold, frankincense, and myrrh), and the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

**The four calling birds** are associated with both the four evangelists and their gospels' Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and the four major prophets' Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

**Five golden rings** has a two-fold significance. A ring, or a circle, has no beginning or end but is continuous. Thereby, the ring reminds us of both God's eternity, His permanent, faithful, and continuous love for us and the circle of faith God's love for us, our love for Him, and our love for our neighbors. The number five also signifies the first five books of the Old Testament the Pentateuch or Torah (the books of law for the Jewish people).

**The six geese a-laying** represent the six days of creative work recounted in Genesis. However, in Judaism, seven was a number of perfection.

**The seven swans** a-swimming continues the Genesis theme, reminding us that God's plan included not just the six days of creating but also the seventh day of rest; we in turn must not forget to make Sunday a holy day by worshipping God at Mass, spending time with our loved ones, and relaxing. Moreover, the seven swans a-swimming refers to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven corporal works of mercy, the seven spiritual works of mercy, and the seven deadly sins.

**The eight maids a-milking** signifies the eight beatitudes and, at that time in our Church, the eight times during the year prescribed for the faithful to receive Holy Communion.

**The nine ladies** dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit and the nine choirs of angels.

**The Ten Commandments** are represented by the ten lords a-leaping.

**Eleven pipers** piping are the eleven faithful apostles at the time of the resurrection and ascension. (Remember that Judas, one of the Twelve, betrayed our Lord and committed suicide.)

**Finally, the number twelve** for the Jewish people represented completion and fullness. Therefore, the twelve drummers drumming are the twelve minor prophets, the twelve precepts of the Apostles Creed (still the structure of the first part of the Catechism), the twelve apostles (particularly the original 11 plus St. Matthias who replaced Judas), and the twelve tribes of Israel.

As we draw closer to Christmas, we should keep in mind the significance of this carol. Actually, I used to find the repetition and lengthiness somewhat irritating until I learned of its historical and religious significance. A good practice would be for parents to teach the carol in light of the history of persecution and the catechesis presented.

# THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS HYMN

## LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

# VIGIL LITURGY OF THE NATIVITY

**LITANY:** For you are Holy O our God...

*Liturgy Book p. 22*

**TRISAGION:** All of you who have been baptized...

*Liturgy Book p. 24*

**PROKIEMENON:** *Psalm 63: 11, 2*

*Tone 4*

The Lord said to Me: "You are My Son; today I have begotten You!"

**Stichon:** "Ask Me, and I shall give You nations as Your Lot and the ends of the earth as Your domain."

**EPISTLE:**

*Hebrews: 1:1-12; 2:1-3*

In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, He spoke to us through a Son, whom He made heir of all things and through whom He created the universe, who is the refulgence of His glory, the very imprint of His being, and who sustains all things by His mighty word. When He had accomplished purification from sins, He took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as far superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say: "You are My Son; this day I have begotten You"? or again: "I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to me"? And again, when He leads the First-born into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Of angels He says: "He makes His angels winds and His ministers a fiery flame." But of the Son: "Your throne, O God, stands forever and ever; and a righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom. You loved justice and hated wickedness; therefore God, Your God, anointed You with the oil of gladness above your companions." And: "At the beginning, O Lord, You established the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment. You will roll them up like a cloak, and like a garment they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end.

But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent to serve, for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

Therefore, we must attend all the more to what we have heard, so that we may not be carried away. For if the word announced through angels proved firm, and every transgression and disobedience received its just recompense, how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? Announced originally through the Lord, it was confirmed for us by those who had heard.

**ALLELUIA:**

*Tone 8*

The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool."

The scepter of Your power the Lord will stretch forth from Sion:  
Rule in the midst of Your Enemies!

# VIGIL LITURGY OF THE NATIVITY

## GOSPEL:

*Luke 2:1-20*

*In those days*, a decree went forth from Caesar Augustus that a census of the whole world should be taken. This first census took place while Cyrenus was governor of Syria. And all were going, each to his own town, to register. And Joseph also went from Galilee out of the town of Nazareth into Judea to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and family of David) to register, together with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass while they were there, that the days for her to be delivered were fulfilled. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds in the same district living in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them and the glory of God shone round about them, and they were very much afraid. And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all the people; for today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you, Who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will among men." And it came to pass, when the angels had departed from them into heaven, that the shepherds were saying to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger. And when they had seen, they understood what had been told them concerning this Child. And all who heard marveled at the things told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept in mind all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken to them.

## HIRMOS:

In you, O woman full of grace, all creation exults, the hierarchy of angels together with the race of men: in you, sanctified Temple, spiritual Paradise, Glory of virgins of whom God took flesh from whom our God Who exists before the world, became a child! For He has made your womb His throne, making it more spacious than the heavens. In you, O Woman full of grace, all creation exults: glory to you!

## KINONIKON:

*Liturgy Book p. 47*

Praise the Lord from the highest. Alleluia!

LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

2021 NATIVITY BETTER BISHOP NICHOLAS

Adam and Eve transgressed God's command; the new Adam, Jesus Christ and the new Eve, the Mother of God, renewed and reconciled our broken humanity with the plan of God. Our broken human nature is divinized. Jesus becomes a man in human flesh to unite our humanity to his divinity: all humanity is called to be divine.

Dear sisters and brothers, clergy and laity, I offer you my love and prayers, asking God to open your hearts to renew yourselves in full commitment to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. And through you may he open the hearts of many others to his gospel message. There is still much brokenness in our world, lack of peace among warring nations, major economic problems all around, imbalance in many aspects of our life, violence and senseless shootings, abortion or killing the unborn, and euthanasia, sometimes called mercy killing but in reality totally against God. We look to our faith and our commitment to living Christ and his teachings to combat the non-godly ways. It all begins with us.

Remain strong in your faith, learn and study it more and live it vibrantly. May the celebration of the Lord's birth open us to renew ourselves once again and not just on December 25, but every day of our life. We celebrate this birth also at the end of the year to embark on a new year with all godly aspects of love and peace.

My love and my prayers for each and everyone of you. May you enjoy this family feast all the days that follow. Allow the Lord to be reborn in you! A blessed feast of the Nativity of Christ, a happy and healthy 2022, and a joyful Feast of the Theophany celebrating God's manifestation through the event of his baptism in the Jordan River by John the Forerunner.

Sincerely yours in the new-born  
Savior,

+Nicholas

Dear Melkites across America,

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Within God's plan for his creation, humanity would live in an eternal paradise where peace would reign among mankind and even with the animal world. God would be glorified in all aspects of his creation and all of these aspects would be for the glorification of man and woman - the apex of God's creation.

Adam and Eve harmed this relationship with God by choosing the devil's temptation to eat of the one tree God had prohibited. Their act created sin and death. Yet the all-loving God created a new plan of renewal with the promise of a Savior born of a woman by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In time the promise was fulfilled through a young girl of Nazareth, Mary the virgin who said yes to God's plan and gave birth to Jesus Christ in the flesh. God now took human flesh to share his divinity with our humanity- he became one of us.

We celebrate this birth each year but not just a birth of the past, rather a new birth today in each and everyone of us. His birth as a human being was our renewal to live in paradise once again. Through our incorporation into the life of Christ: baptism, chrismation and Eucharist, we become other Christs committed to living his life. He is reborn in us and the celebration of his birth in Bethlehem must become a reminder every day of our life that he is our Savior, GOD WITH US - EMMANUEL.

The gospel writers Matthew and Luke present us with a beautiful account of the Lord's birth with a cast of characters and even nature. We witness the earth providing a humble cave and an animals' feeding box in which the child Jesus is laid. The heavens reveal a star to point out to the Magi or wise stargazers where he would be born. Heavenly angels announce to shepherds in the field the good news singing "glory to God and peace on earth." With their sheep they go to Bethlehem's cave followed later by the Magi bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh and there they find heaven on Earth - God in the flesh born of the Virgin Mary. She is protected by the noble Joseph who becomes the protector of Mary's child.

This holy event opens our hearts to accept a humble birth of the everlasting and almighty God in the flesh. It has motivated artists to create many images of the miraculous birth in icons, paintings, writings and other Media forms ; even our calendar is calculated from the time of his birth. He becomes the center of all humanity.

2021 NATIVITY LETTER BISHOP NICHOLAS

RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

## DIVINE LITURGY OF THE NATIVITY

### *Faith:*

All are welcome to come forward and approach the Holy Chalice who believe and profess the Catholic faith in the Holy Eucharist; namely, that what we *perceive* as bread and wine, we *believe*, in truth, is the precious and all-holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ and worship it with the same adoration we ascribe to the Holy Trinity.

### *Charity:*

Furthermore, you should approach these Life-giving Mysteries if you are a practicing Catholic, have not be neglectful of your religious observances, and are not aware of having committed any grave sins, unless having first received sacramental confession, as commanded by St. Paul (1 Cor. 11:27-30):

★ Absence from the weekly Sunday divine services. [School activities such as sports on a regular basis, inconvenience, 'fatigue' or anger at fellow parishioners do not excuse]

★ Works of the Flesh: fornication (contraception), impurity (masturbation), immodesty (pornography), idolatry, enmities, wrath, murder, drunkenness, revelling (excessive feasting). [Gal. 5:19-21]

One should try, if possible, to be reconciled with any estranged family and neighbor. (Mt 5:23)

### *Hope:*

All who approach will have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting, and be as is possible at peace with all men.

[Since the proper effect of the reception of the Holy Eucharist is the divine union (communion) with Christ and His Body, the Church; those Christians who are not members of the Catholic Church will see that Holy Communion requires first establishing that visible bond of love.]

# DAY LITURGY OF THE NATIVITY

## GREAT DOXOLOGY:

ANTIPHONS: *Nativity of Our Lord*

**FIRST:**

**SECOND:**

O Son of God, who were born of the Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia

**THIRD:**

## ENTRANCE HYMN:

From the womb before the morning star I begot You.

The Lord has sworn and He will not repent:

You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedek.

## Refrain:

O Son of God, Who were born of the Virgin, save us who sing to You Alleluia.

## TROPARIA:

*Nativity of our Lord (Tone 4)*

*Hypakoi of the Nativity*

O Little Child lying in a manger, by means of a star, heaven has called and led to You the Magi, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, astounded to behold, not scepters and thrones, but extreme poverty. What, indeed, is lower than a cave? What is humbler than swaddling clothes- and yet the splendor of your divinity shone forth in them resplendently. O Lord, glory to You!

KONTAKION: *Nativity of Our Lord (Tone 3)*

TRISAGION: All of you who have been baptized...

PROKIEMENON: *Ps. 65:4, 1*

Let all on earth worship You and sing praise to You.

*Stichon:* Shout joyfully to God, all the earth.

## EPISTLE:

*Brethren*, when the fullness of time had come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!" So that one is no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, an heir also of God through Jesus Christ

ALLELUIA: *Psalm 18:2, 3*

The heavens declare the glory of God

and the firmament proclaims the work of His hands.

Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night proclaims knowledge.

## GOSPEL:

*When Jesus was born* in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, Magi came from the East to Jerusalem saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." But

*Liturgy Book p. 17*

*Liturgy Book p. 29*

*Liturgy Book p. 151*

*Liturgy Book p. 152*

*Liturgy Book p. 151*

*Liturgy Book p. 152*

*(Tone 8)*

*Liturgy Book p. 153*

*Liturgy Book p. 51*

*(Tone 8)*

*Galatians 4:4-7*

*Matthew 2:1-12*

LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

**NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD,**

**GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST**

**Saturday, 25 December ♦♦♦♦♦**

**Galatians 4:4-7 †† Matthew 2:1-12**

**10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy**

**SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY**

*Second Day of the Nativity*

*Holy & Just Man Joseph, Spouse of Theotokos*

*James, the Brother of the Lord*

*David, the King and Prophet*

*Holy Hieromartyr Euthymios*

**Sunday, 26 December ♦♦♦♦♦**

**Hebrews 2:11-18 †† Matthew 2:13-23**

**9:00 a.m. Resurrectional Orthros**

**10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy**

*Potluck Dinner follows*

**Monday, 27 December ♦♦♦♦♦**

*Third Day of the Nativity*

*Protomartyr & Archdeacon Stephen*

*Venerable Father Theodore the Branded, Confessor, brother of Theophane the Hymnographer*

**Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-5 & 47-60 †† Mt 21:33-42**

**Tuesday, 28 December ♦♦♦♦♦**

*Fourth Day of the Nativity*

*Holy Martyrs burned at Nicomedia*

**James 2:14-26 †† Mark 10:46-52**

**Wednesday, 29 December ♦♦♦♦♦**

*Fifth Day of the Nativity*

*Holy Innocents put to death by King Herod*

*Venerable Father Marcellus,*

*Hegumen of the Monastery of the Acemetes*

**James 3:1-10 †† Mark 11:11-23**

**Thursday, 30 December ♦♦♦♦♦**

*Sixth Day of the Nativity*

*Holy Martyr Anysia*

**James 3:11-18; 4:1-6 †† Mark 11:22-26**

**Friday, 31 December ♦♦♦♦♦**

*Leave-taking of the Nativity*

*Venerable mother Melany the Roman*

*Holy Martyr Zoticos, the Feeder of Orphans*

**James 4:7-17; 5:1-9 †† Mark 11:27-33**

**CIRCUMCISION IN THE FLESH OF OUR**

**LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST**

*Father among the Saints Basil the Great,*

**Saturday, 01 January ♦♦♦♦♦**

**Colossians 2:8-12 †† Luke 2:20-22, 2:40-52**

**10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy**

**SUNDAY BEFORE THE THEOPHANY**

*Forefeast of the Theophany*

*Father among the Saints Sylvester of Rome*

**Sunday, 02 January ♦♦♦♦♦**

**1 Timothy 3:13-16; 4:1-5 †† Matthew 3:1-6**

**9:00 a.m. - Resurrectional Orthros**

**10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy**

**Monday, 03 January ♦♦♦♦♦**

*Second Day of Forefeast of the Theophany*

*Holy Prophet Malachy*

*Holy Martyr Gordios*

**Timothy 4:5-8 †† Mark 1:1-8**

**Tuesday, 04 January ♦♦♦♦♦**

*Third Day of Forefeast of the Theophany*

*Synaxis of the Seventy Holy Disciples*

*Venerable Father Theoctistos,*

*Hegumen of the Monastery of Cucume in Sicily*

**1 Timothy 4:9-15 †† John 5:17-24**

**PARAMONY OF THE THEOPHANY**

**[DAY OF STRICT ABSTINENCE,**

**& FASTING UNTIL NOON]**

*Holy Martyrs Theopemptos & Theonas*

*Venerable Mother Syncretica*

**Wednesday, 05 January ♦♦♦♦♦ Fast Day**

**1 Corinthians 9:19-27 †† Luke 3:1-18**

**10:00 a.m. - Royal Hours**

*Confessions following*

**7:00 p.m. - Great Vespers**

**THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD, GOD AND**

**SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

**[HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION]**

**Thursday, 06 January ♦♦♦♦♦**

**Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-7 †† Matthew 3:13-17**

**10:00 a.m. - Festal Orthros**

**5:30 p.m. - Divine Liturgy**

**- Great Blessing of Waters**

# DAY LITURGY OF THE NATIVITY

## IN LOVING MEMORY:

*Edward & Dorothy Abda*

Karen Kane

Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Barrett

*Paul Bauman*

Paul & Margaret Patchoski

*Helen Anna Bartnicki*

*Joseph Stanley Bartnicki*

*Thomas Bartnicki*

Steve Bartnicki

*Edward and Marie Barrett*

Mr. & Mrs. A. Barrett

*A.J. Bolus*

Veronica Bolus

*Frank G. Bolus*

*George R. Bolus*

Veronica Bolus

*John R. & Louise Chally*

Mary Lou Vandorick

*Rosemary Eber*

Veronica Bolus

*Mary Kay McElhenny*

Paul & Margert Patchoski

*Frank & Minnie Milewski*

*Sonny Milewski*

Michael & Bertha Milewski

*Karen Murry*

Veronica Bolus

*Eugene J. O'Hop*

*Helen M. O'Hop*

Steve Bartnicki

*Edmund Jack & Marie Patchoski*

Paul & Margaret Patchoski

## IN THANKSGIVING:

*Karin Mille*

## 2021 CHRISTMAS FLOWER MEMORIALS

## LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

when King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and so was all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and Scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judaea; for thus it is written by the prophet, 'And you, Bethlehem, of the land of Judah are by no means least among the princes of Judah; for from you shall come forth a leader who shall shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod summoned the Magi secretly, and carefully ascertained from them the time when the star had appeared to them. And sending them to Bethlehem he said, "Go and make careful inquiry concerning the Child, and when you have found Him, bring me word, that I too may go and worship Him." Now they, having heard the king, went their way. And behold, the star they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. And when they saw the star they rejoiced exceedingly. And entering the house, they found the Child with Mary His mother, and falling down they worshipped Him. And opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another way.

**GREETING:** Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

**HIRMOS:**

*Liturgy Book p. 154*

O my soul, magnify the One Who is more honorable and glorious than the heavenly powers! Behold a mystery, a strange and wonderful mystery: the cave has become heaven, the Virgin a throne of the Cherubim, and the manger a noble place where Christ our God reposes. Wherefore let us praise and exalt Him!

**KINONIKON:**

*Liturgy Book p. 155*

The Lord has sent Redemption to His people. Alleluia.

**POST-COMMUNION HYMN:** *Troparion of the Nativity*

*Liturgy Book p. 152*

### DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

**24 December 2020**

6:00 p.m. *Deceased Members of St. Joseph Parishioners*  
Midnight: *Nativity Flowers Intentions*

**25 December 2020**

10:00 a.m. ✠ *Rev. Michael Jolly*

**26 December 2020**

*Michael & Carolyn De Tar ✠ from Zachary & Catherine Bateman*

**01 January**

*Nathan Cheffers ✠*

### A Heartfelt Thank You

*to Dr. Nathan Lefler for his Catechetical Series in preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord.*

*to all those who decorated the Church:*

*Z. Bateman Family  
Fitzpatrick Family  
Lefler Family*

*for baking the Qurban:  
the Schiller Family*

**BEHOLD a new and wondrous mystery.**

My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn. The Angels sing. The Archangels blend their voice in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt His glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He Who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side, the Sun of justice. And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed; He had the power; He descended; He redeemed; all things yielded in obedience to God. This day He Who is, is Born; and He Who is, becomes what He was not. For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassability, remaining unchanged.

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominations, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Since this heavenly birth cannot be described, neither does His coming amongst us in these days permit of too curious scrutiny. Though I know that a Virgin this day gave birth, and I believe that God was begotten before all time, yet the manner of this generation I have learned to venerate in silence and I accept that this is not to be probed too curiously with wordy speech.

For with God we look not for the order of nature, but rest our faith in the power of Him who works.

What shall I say to you; what shall I tell you? I behold a Mother who has brought forth; I see a Child come to this light by birth. The manner of His conception I cannot comprehend.

Nature here rested, while the Will of God labored. O ineffable grace! The Only Begotten, Who is before all ages, Who cannot be touched or be perceived, Who is simple, without body, has now put on my body, that is visible and liable to corruption. For what reason? That coming amongst us he may teach us, and teaching, lead us by the hand to the things that men cannot see. For since men believe that the eyes are more trustworthy than the ears, they doubt of that which they do not see, and so He has deigned to show Himself in bodily presence, that He may remove all doubt.

**HOIMLY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM  
HOIMLY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

Christ, finding the holy body and soul of the Virgin, builds for Himself a living temple, and as He had willed, formed there a man from the Virgin; and, putting Him on, this day came forth; unashamed of the lowliness of our nature.

For it was to Him no lowering to put on what He Himself had made. Let that handiwork be forever glorified, which became the cloak of its own Creator. For as in the first creation of flesh, man could not be made before the clay had come into His hand, so neither could this corruptible body be glorified, until it had first become the garment of its Maker.

What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of days has become an infant. He Who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He Who cannot be touched, Who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He Who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infants bands. But He has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation the measure of His Goodness.

For this He assumed my body, that I may become capable of His Word; taking my flesh, He gives me His spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit that He may save me.

Come, then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been planted on the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels.

Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things commingle. He became Flesh. He did not become God. He was God. Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive. He was placed in a manger, so that He, by whom all things are nourished, may receive an infants food from His Virgin Mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the Magi may more easily see Him. Since this day the Magi too have come, and made a beginning of withstanding tyranny; and the heavens give glory, as the Lord is revealed by a star.

To Him, then, Who out of confusion has wrought a clear path, to Christ, to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, we offer all praise, now and forever. Amen.