



COPTIC ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES

Bishop Youssef

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 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" (John 1: 1-5).

My Beloved Youth,

The peace and joy of the Glorious Nativity Feast be with you all.

While celebrating the Glorious Nativity Feast, we need to reflect upon the new beginning that we have through the incarnation of the Son of God. With His birth, a new era in our life starts. Through His redemptive act on the cross He has established with us a precious blood covenant, a new inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, and a new life in which we become the temple of the Holy Spirit partaking in the Bread of Life.

From the beginning He is; For He is Eternal with His Father and the Holy Spirit; and in the fullness of time, the time of love; He took flesh in order to give us a new life. *"When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine, says the Lord God" (Ezekiel 16:8).*

He once shone in the Old Testament through symbols, types, figures, promises, and prophecies; but the heaviness of darkness blinded the sight and insight of humanity to the understanding of His light. He was shining in the natural conscience (Rom 1: 19, 20). However, the darkened nature of man as a result of his fall could not comprehend the light.

Then, in the fullness of time, He came to give us a new light. He came in order to enlighten our life once again as the time to favor His people has come *"You will arise and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favor her; yes, the set time, has come" (Psalm 102:13).*

In his book the "Incarnation Of The Word" St. Athanasius wrote, "What then has not come to pass, that the Christ must do? What is left unfulfilled, that the Jews should now disbelieve with impunity? For if, I say, -which is just what we actually see,—there is no longer king nor prophet nor Jerusalem nor sacrifice nor vision among them, but even the whole earth is tilled with the knowledge of God, and gentiles, leaving their godlessness, are now taking refuge with the God of Abraham, through the Word, even our Lord Jesus Christ, then it must be plain, even to those who are exceedingly obstinate, that the Christ is come, and that He has illumined absolutely all with His light, and given them the true and divine teaching concerning His Father."

This issue of Mighty Arrows highlights our new beginning with the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, during this season of the Glorious Nativity Feast, may we all joyfully celebrate the new life that He has granted us, renewing our covenant with Him, rededicating our whole life to Him *"for of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Rom 11:36).*

God bless you,

His Grace Bishop Youssef

Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States