



## Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

### Monthly Message for the Consecrated

February 2023

## Where is Christ born?

2023 years ago, Herod asked this question to the chief priests and the scribes, and the answer was, "in Bethlehem" because this is how the prophecies were: *"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel."* (Matthew 2:6)

Christ was born in the flesh at that time, but He is born spiritually within us all the time, *"That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."* (Ephesians 3:17)

But as there were people who did not receive Him, *"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him."* (John 1:11)

And there are people who didn't like to get Him into the house, *"Because there was no room for them in the inn."* (Luke 2:7)

So today as yesterday, there are homes unprepared to receive Christ and hearts that are not equipped for this great grace.

If you want Christ to dwell in you today, be born within you, and come to your home, you must know, *"Where should Christ be born?"*

### 1. Christ is born where humility exists

The Lord chose Bethlehem the small, belittled village, and chose the manger to be born there.

And how can He not be born in the place of humility, and His incarnation is originally based on humility, *"but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men."* (Philippians 2:7)

And the orphan girl from whom He took a body, "Our Mother Mary," was a humble human being, *"Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."* (Luke 1:38)

- The Israelites trembled when the Lord appeared in the midst of fire, fog and storm, but when Christ was born humbled in a manger as a poor man, the heavenly forces trembled.

Humility moves the heart of God and the heavenly hosts.

## 2. Christ is born where love exists

Because He is the God of love, *"Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you."* (2 Corinthians 13:11)

His redemption is based on love: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16)

Therefore, God commands us that one of the signs of our birth from God is to love one another: *"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."* (1 John 4:7)

It was Zacchaeus' love that led him to climb the tree to see who Jesus was, and for this love the Lord Jesus said to him, *"Today I must stay at your house."* (Luke 19:5)

It is the love of the sinful woman that led her to accept mockery and vilification in the house of Simon the Pharisee for the virtue of knowing Christ.

- In one of the churches named after St. Mark, the gardener used see St. Mark going around the church in the early morning every day, then there came a period when this gardener no longer saw St. Mark. So, he went to the patriarch father and told him what he was seeing and what is happening now, so the patriarch father paid attention and began to inquire, and he learned that the fathers of the church were in strife, so he gathered them and said to them, "Look what your strife did? It caused St. Mark to stop appearing. Do you expect the Lord Jesus to be pleased with you and to come by His grace in you to serve His children? I don't think so.

The fathers were then ashamed of themselves and reconciled before the patriarch, and St. Mark reappeared.

### 3. Christ is born where purity exists

The Lord says in the book of Wisdom, *"For wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subdued by sin."* (Wisdom 1:4)

*"And throughout the nations she conveys herself to holy souls, establishing them as friends and prophets of God"* (Wisdom 7:27)

The Lord Jesus did not forget in His Gospel Anna, daughter of Phanuel, this widow who lived 84 years in purity, and whose husband died when she was young, but she struggled for purity and chastity, and deserved to be remembered among the witnesses of the birth of the Lord of glory.

As David the prophet says, *"The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me."* (Psalms 18:20)

### 4. Christ is born where prayer, vigilance and praise are

The Lord Jesus has chosen shepherds who watch over their flock to be witnesses of His miraculous birth, *"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving."* (Colossians 4:2)

And He called His house where He dwells the house of prayer, *"My house shall be called a house of prayer."* (Matthew 21:13)

And also the heavenly hosts used to praise God saying, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!*" (Luke 2:14)

## 5. Christ is born in repentant souls

Zacchaeus in order to make Christ enter his house left half of his wealth and compensated 4 times for everyone who wronged him. We need to repent and sanctify our lives to be all for the Lord "*Holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.*" (Hebrews 12:14)

This is the Church's call to all her children from the very beginning of its foundation "*And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*" (Luke 24:47)

O Lord do not make us sleep oblivious to the day You come to visit us as Bethlehem overlooked You but make us fully prepared to receive You in the manger of hearts.

Do not pass us a forgotten guest as happened to You in Bethlehem but fill us with spiritual awakening.

Come, Lord Jesus, and do not slow down.