

## The Promise of Healing: The Nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ

My Beloved Children,

Christ is born. Let us glorify Him. “Glory be to Him, who never felt the need of our praising Him; yet felt the need as being kind to us, and thirsted as loving us, and asks us to give to Him, and longs to give to us. His fruit was mingled with us men, that in Him we might come near to Him, who condescended to us. By the Fruit of His stem He grafted us into His Tree” (St. Ephraim of Syria). He chose the manger to heal us from indulgences and unnecessities and to share in our scarcities. He chose the humble mother to cradle Him and provide for His needs with the little that she had. He chose to be an outcast at His birth to share in our lack of privilege and neglect. There is a deep message of love in all His choices. His life explained His divinity and His humanity. He is both God and Man; yet, in His humility never did He object to poverties nor complain of adversities.

God created us out of love and promised to love us. He created man in His own image and in His likeness and gave him dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and everything that moves on the earth (c. Genesis 1). In His incarnation, He came with meekness and without executive authority to rule in this world, but only with the name of “Savior” to save us (c. Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:11) and “Immanuel that we may understand that God with us” (c. Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22-23). “The Lord did not come to make a display. He came to heal and to teach suffering men. For one who wanted to make a display the thing would have been just to appear and dazzle the beholders. But for Him Who came to heal and to teach the way was not merely to dwell here, but to put Himself at the disposal of those who needed Him” (c. St. Athanasius, On the Incarnation).

The world was in dire need of healing and is still in need of His curing hand. He kept His promise and came to heal, reconcile, and restore. “Behold, I will bring it [the city] health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth” (Jeremiah 33:6). In His incarnation, He revealed that He is King of Peace. The angels praised God and proclaimed peace at the Lord’s birth, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” (Luke 2:14). St. Mary the Ever-Virgin Mother responded to the exultation of her kinswoman, Elizabeth, by affirming that God has kept all His promises, “As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever” (c. Luke 1:46–55). Christ’s incarnation was the fulfillment of all promises. His incarnation fulfilled His promise to heal our spiritual infirmities. His incarnation is the fulfillment of His love.

Too proud, too busy, too stubborn, humanity turned their face from Him on the night of His birth until now. Still, He kept His promise to come to us and to heal us. At His presentation into the temple, Simon the elder tried to explain the inexplicable, “Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Luke 2:34–35). The Holy Scripture can be viewed from two perspectives, promises and fulfillments. The people had needs and expressed them to God through His prophets. He always listened to their pleas and prepared ways to deliver them from enemies, famines, and destitutions. He promised relief and in the fullness of time, He saved them by healing them from their own vileness. There was only one contingency, and that was to freely choose Him. “He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8). We still need to be healed.

We lift our hearts to God through the intercessions of His mother St. Mary and all the angels and the prayers of His saints to preserve the life of our honored father and patriarch, His Holiness Pope

Tawadros II, for many years and peaceful times, and to protect all the clergy, congregations, servants, and churches throughout the world. May the love, joy, and peace of the holy Nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ fill your hearts throughout the year.

God bless you.

Bishop Youssef  
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