

## **An Invitation from God: The Joyous Nativity Feast**

My Beloved Children:

I wish you a very blessed and joyful Nativity Feast, confident with jubilation in the birth of the King of kings and Lord of lords, and always assured that you are beloved children of God. On this glorious night, we celebrate the awesome Nativity Feast in which the world has been invited to eternal life. A host of angels invited the lowly shepherds to the obscure place where our King lay. This is our Savior who came to rescue us. “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13–14).

This Holy Child came to our earth to invite us to His heaven. He entered the world, vulnerable and needing protection and nourishment. He sought shelter, but found none. He came in need to satisfy our needs. He came to invite all humanity to share in His glory. He emptied Himself to rescue us. We needed a Savior, not a ruler, nor a prophet, nor a sage. Thus, He came to us and became one of us that He might rescue us. He came to the afflicted and the despised, the forgotten and the scorned, the righteous and the evil, the wise and the foolish, the rich and the poor, to every race and to all nations. He did not recompense those who reviled Him, but vowed to soothe all our sorrows and anguish with His love, tenderness, and acceptance as a loving Father. “For I the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you’” (Isaiah 41:13). He invited you and me to be part of His family and heirs in His kingdom.

Snubbed by His own, He did not refrain to extend the invitation. In a manger in Bethlehem lay the Child and Savior of the world. Maybe His lowliness would shame us and transform us that we might learn from Him: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28–29). He became like one of us that we may desire to be more like Him. He continues to offer us shelter near His heart and a shield beneath His wings, but many decline the invitation: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!” (Luke 13:34).

The invitation remains open. He furnished the earth for us, and also prepared heaven for us. His heart yearns for all His children, and His arms are open wide: “He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young” (Isaiah 40:11). It is time we accept His precious invitation with love, gratitude, and joy. Glorify Him and exalt Him for sharing in our lives through His incarnation. Thank Him for He bowed the heavens and came to rescue us. Rejoice in the nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ in the humble manger. Pray for our blessed Church that teaches us and guides us like a loving and wise mother to her children. May the Lord protect her and preserve the life of our honored patriarch, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, for many years and peaceful times.

Glory to the Holy Trinity. Amen.

God bless you.

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