



Nativity According to the Flesh of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

Thursday December 25, 2020 / January 7, 2021

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

We magnify Thee, O Life-Giving Christ, Who for our sakes now art born in the flesh of the Virgin Mary, unwedded and most pure.

***The Prologue From Ochrid
Holy Hierarch Nikolai Velimirovich***

'And when the fullness of time was come, God sent His only-begotten Son' (Gal. 4:4), to save the human race. And when the ninth month had come after the archangel Gabriel appeared to the most holy Virgin in Nazareth, saying: 'Hail) thou that art highly favored... thou shalt conceive and bear a son' - at that time a decree went forth from Caesar Augustus that all the inhabitants of the Roman Empire be taxed. In accordance with this decree, everyone had to go to his own town and there be

inscribed. Therefore, righteous Joseph came with the most holy Virgin to Bethlehem, the city of David, for they were both of the royal House of David. But, there being a great many people in that small city for the census, Joseph and Mary could not find lodging in any house, and found shelter in a cave which the shepherds used as a sheepfold. In this cave the most holy Virgin gave birth to the Savior of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. Bearing Him without pain, as He was conceived without sin of the Holy Spirit and not of man, she herself wrapped Him in swaddling bands, worshipped Him as God and laid Him in a manger. Then righteous Joseph drew near and worshipped Him as the divine Fruit of a virgin womb. Then the shepherds came in from the fields, directed by an angel of God, and worshipped Him as Messiah and Savior. The shepherds had heard a multitude of angels singing: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men' (Luke 2:14). At that time there also came wise men from the East, led by a wonderful star, bearing their gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh, and worshipped Him as King of kings, offering Him their gifts (Matt. 2:11). Thus He came into the world Whose coming had been foretold by the prophets and Who was born in the way that they had prophesied: of the most holy Virgin, in the city of Bethlehem, of the lineage of David according to the flesh, at the time when there was no longer in Jerusalem a king of the tribe of Judah, but Herod the stranger was on the throne. After many types and prefigurings, messengers and heralds, prophets and righteous men, wise men and kings, finally He appeared, the Lord of the world and King of kings, to perform the work of the salvation of mankind that could not be performed by His servants. May His be eternal glory and praise! Amen. ©1985 Lazarica Press, Birmingham UK

[Yolka / Talent Show](#)

Our Christmas Yolka [is here](#). This unique video features a short presentation of our previous Yolka shows, a compilation of video-recorded talent show performances from our children (and adults) and a special appearance by St. Nicholas. We offer our sincere thanks to the director and producer of this creative video, Natallia Makarava. And everyone who participated in the talent show did a great job. We thank them for sharing with us their best wishes. Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

"HE BOWED THE HEAVENS AND CAME DOWN" REFLECTIONS ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

When the Creator beheld man, whom He had made with His hands, about to perish, He bowed the heavens and came down; and He was endued with man's nature in very truth, becoming incarnate of a Virgin divinely pure: for He has glorified Himself.

There is no mystery greater than that of the Incarnation of God. In the quiet majesty of an archangel's salutation, months before in Nazareth, a wonder beyond description was begun; and here, on this night, that wonder will be fully manifest. The great mystery which the holy Virgin, now holy Mother, had for long days stored up and treasured in her heart, the reality hidden but to a select few, is now to shine forth in all the radiance of a heavenly star. Sages shall travel the world to see it, shepherds shall clamor to behold it, a king shall feign to prevent it. But nothing shall thwart this great, salvific act of the One who 'beheld man, whom He had made with His hands, about to perish'. In the troubled agony of a rushed birth, in the mire of an animals' dwelling, the miracle that is the foundation of the Christian life takes place. Here God 'bows the heavens and comes down' into the full reality of His creation.

Yet, despite our songs, there was no crèche in Bethlehem. The night may have been holy, but it was not silent. Soldiers hunted a mysterious 'newborn king' while travelers packed into overcrowded hostelries to appease the census mandates of a new taxation. This will have been a loud night indeed. And in the stable: a squalor, a filth, a stench. Nowhere, here, the serene harmony of our usual vision of the child's birth. Nor was this but a child. The whole setting of the mystery speaks to us of something different, something abnormal. Something impossible.

Today a Virgin brings forth the Super-substantial, and the earth offers a cavern to the Unapproachable. Angels, together with the shepherds, sing praises; the wise men journey onward with the star. For, for our sakes, God, who is before all the ages, is born a little child.

All the noise of the surroundings, the terrible paradox of the Virgin 'divinely pure' stationed in the muddy squalor of the stable, shocks us to consider the full reality of the present moment. One is brought into the substance of human nature who is beyond substance, beyond nature. Magi draw near to Him who cannot be approached. Shepherds gaze upon Him at whom none may look and live. God, who before time fashioned all things, cries and breathes the breath which at first, He gave to man, now as an infant child.

This night was not silent, and the shepherds did not merely sing. These gathered at the feet of one most pure (herself a miracle) to behold the human birth of Purity Himself. The shepherds came to the Mother of God to set eye upon the coming of God to man.

This notion of the coming together of God and man is at the heart of the present mystery, and is often hailed in the liturgical texts of the Church. As the shepherds approached the newborn Son, and as later the wise men from the East, so, says the Church, do I:

A mystery strange and most glorious do I behold: The cavern, heaven; the Virgin, the cherubic throne; the manger, the receptacle wherein lies Christ our God, whom nothing may contain. Him, therefore, do we magnify, praising Him in song.

In the glory of the Incarnation, the divine and the worldly are suddenly, triumphantly, united and transformed. This filthy cavern is no more a mere stable, but one stands here in all the radiance of heaven itself. The Mother of God, human even as am I, holds in her arms the pre-eternal Son and is in her material person the divine throne of more honor than the cherubim. The wood of the feeding trough, for all its rancor, is here and now the bed which holds in its embrace the God whom all the heavens and the earth cannot contain. Divine things and human are, in this moment, indistinguishable. Do I behold woman, or throne? Cave, or heaven? *Man, or God?* The earthly has been brought to the divine and the divine has come to the earthly, and in this most awesome mystery we behold a thing ‘strange and most glorious’. I come, and I gaze, but I am struck with awe, for I behold the things of Paradise resting in a cavern.

Indeed, it is this mixture of the heavenly and earthly that is the whole point of our chief of mysteries. It is in the union of heaven and earth, of man and God, says the Church, that our salvation takes form. Thus, can we cry out to Christ:

O Christ, who has conformed Thyself unto our base, mortal mold, and by that participation in our lowly flesh has imparted unto us a share of the nature divine; who, though Thou didst become earthborn, yet didst remain still God and hast exalted our horn: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

Christ has ‘imparted to us a share of the divine’. We must hear these words a thousand times, receive their wonder anew at each hearing. This feast, this mystery beyond description, is not solely about God becoming man. We are not to be struck with wonder, when gazing into the manger, only in that we behold there the eternally begotten second Person of the holy Trinity—awesome mystery though this truly be. As I approach the cave of the birth on this night, the most terrible, the most wondrous and the most ineffable awe is borne in my heart when I behold in the manger not only God, but *me*. It is *my* nature that the Son has taken for Himself in this unspeakable act of love, and I behold today, before mine eyes, this nature imparted the nature of my God. I behold Adam, a mortal, made of clay, made perfect in the grace of Christ.

This is the wonder of the Nativity. God comes to us, gives Himself to us, and not only in deed and action. Our very nature is taken up into His, and to our mortal frame is imparted a portion of the divine life. This life, we eagerly remember, is that which conquers all—the life that conquers evil, sin, darkness, even death itself, as we sing with such fervor in the light of Pascha. That this

life has, in the Incarnation, become our life, is the source of all our hope, confidence and joy in the Christian faith. It is the motivation for our struggle, for our labor, and it is the light yoke by which we are set free. Our bonds may now be broken. Our slavery may be overturned. Our long bondage to sin and exile from Paradise may now be ended. It is both telling and fitting that the Israelite lament at captivity, enshrined in the Psalm by which we, at another point in our year, enter into the purifying sorrow of Great Lent, is deliberately brought to mind in the hymnography of the Nativity:

Grief put aside the instruments of song, for the children of Sion sang no more in alien lands. Yea Christ, in that He hath shone forth in Bethlehem, sets us free from every error, and sets free also the musical harmony of Babylon. Wherefore let us sing the song: Let all creation bless the Lord, and magnify Him unto all the ages!

As human and divine meet in the Incarnation, our captivity at last is ended and the people of Sion again find voice for their song. No longer does our nature dwell exiled in an alien land, separated eternally from its Creator by sin, by the wiles of the Evil One, by any power whatever. The deep-set sorrow of hopeless exile is banished when Christ 'sets us free from every error' and unites in His person what is fallen in mine and perfect in His. There is no better refrain of awe at this mystery than the words sung at Vespers on the eve of the feast:

O come, let us rejoice in the Lord as we declare this present mystery: The partition wall of disunion has been destroyed, the flaming sword is turned back, the cherubim withdraw from the Tree of Life, and I partake of the food of Paradise, whence I had been expelled because of disobedience. For the immutable Image of the Father, the Image of His eternity, takes the form of a servant, having come forth of a Mother unwedded, yet having suffered no change. For that which He was, He remains, being very God; and that which He was not, He has assumed, becoming true man because of His love for humankind. Unto Him let us cry aloud: O God, who was born of a Virgin, have mercy upon us! <http://orthochristian.com/50829.html>

Holy Hierarch Philaret of Moscow
Homily On The Birth Of Christ

Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16)

The New Adam comes forth from virgin earth. Woman, the source of the curse, bears the dew of blessing. The true Noah has appeared, *Who shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed (Gen. 5:29)*. Melchizedek, *without father, without mother, without descent (Heb. 7:3)*, comes to inherit the eternal Kingdom and Priesthood. The long night of fear and universal expectation finally passes, and the morning light penetrates the darkness of the Old Testament Sanctuary, opened not daily, but eternally to the East. The Heavenly Manna is poured forth from the vessel which contained it. The rod of Jesse blossoms forth in place of the fading rod of Aaron. Christ is born.

Come, meek shepherds, and kiss the Lamb and Shepherd—the Lamb, tended by the shepherd, and the Shepherd, Who is able to gather into one peaceful fold the lambs with the wolves,

and the calves with the lions. Come, wise men, and bow down before the mystery of the ancient Child; learn from the unspeaking Word, taste of the angelic bread at the table of the speechless animals and see that the Lord is good. Choirs of heavenly hosts who have praised the Lord since the creation of the stars, double and triple your doxology before your Sun, Who has risen for us. Christ is born.

Christ is born in Bethlehem: is this the reason for all the present joy and all the glory to God in the highest? Glory to God: He is also born for us, *unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given* (Is. 9:6). Amid the celebration of His birth, the Church suffers pains of birth, *until Christ be formed* in us (cf. Gal. 4:19). Let us not disdain the joyful sorrow of our Mother: let us take at least a few traits from the image of the birth of Jesus and let us place them in our hearts.

Bethlehem was the ancestral home of the forefathers of Jesus: however, Joseph and Mary did not have even a poor hut, a piece of inherited land or a permanent residence. Providence, by the hand of Caesar, led them to this place from which, it was determined, would come a ruler of Israel (cf., Matt. 2:6). The foreigners in the land of the forefathers, the newcomers to their own homeland gave a homeland to the Son, *of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named* (Eph. 3:15)—Christians! As long as we live in the world as satiated citizens and enjoy it as its masters, Christ cannot be formed in us. The world continually tries to stamp on our souls its passing images; satiated desires give birth to other desires which imperceptibly grow into giants and build Babylon. *Blessed shall he be who shall seize and dash the infants* of this Babylon *against the rock* of faith and alienate himself from the city which exists here in order to see the one that is coming! If Abraham, at the command of God, had not departed from his land and his people, he would not have received the glorious testament, the promise, and the inheritance. If suffering Israel had not decided to endure the difficulties of a dangerous and unknown journey, Jehovah would not have strengthened it and prepared in it a dwelling-place for Himself. If the intuitive mother had not sent the innocent Jacob away from the vengeful Esau, he would not have come to the fearful place, the heavenly gates. Only the homeless strangers find Bethel and Bethlehem—the house of God and the house of the living Bread. Only the voluntary exiles of earth will be received as citizens of heaven. Whoever desires to be a dwelling place of the Son of God, must have his homeland only in God, and with all his ties to his earthly homeland, however natural and proper they may be, he must not compare it to the heavenly.

By taking nothing from this world for his birth, Jesus evidently wished to show that He had no personal possessions. The Carpenter received His name from His father; His mother, having carried Him in Her womb, could offer no other virtue for this service other than, by Her own admission, the sense of Her own unworthiness: *For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden* (Luke 1:48). He concealed His immeasurable eternity until the day of His birth. A manger became the throne for the King of kings, His robes—swaddling clothes, the first servants of the Kingdom—the shepherds of the flock. The power and wisdom of God were concealed in the infirmities of an infant. But who can measure the distance from the height of His Divine Essence to the depth of His belittlement? The finite mind is not able to comprehend His operations, neither His ascent higher than the heavens, nor His descent to the lowliness of fallen nature. Seeing such humility, what must a heart feel which desires to be formed after the image of Christ? Strength of mind, greatness of spirit, celebrity of deeds, privilege of rank! I am not deceived by you and do not envy those who are proud of you. There is no greater wisdom than to reject wisdom for the

sake of Christ; there is no greater glory than to share dishonor with Jesus; there is no greater wealth than the poverty of Jesus. There is no other entrance to perfection and blessedness than through the infancy of Christ; there is no better adornment for the soul, in which He must dwell, than to see itself deprived of all adornment, like His manger. The current of Grace, like the flow of a river, steams into the vales; the cedars on the mountains observe the thunder and lightning. God creates out of nothing: as long as we want and think about being something, God does not begin His work in us. Humility and self-denial are the foundation of His dwelling in us: whoever delves into this more deeply is established higher and more secure.

One of the essential features of the birth of Jesus was the purity of His Mother, not violated either by sight or by thought. She had to have a betrothed, but merely in order to have someone who would be a protector and witness of Her virtue, and so that Her holy virginity would not seem to be disgraced by marriage. At the same time She was, as the Church confesses with one mind, a Virgin before birth, during birth, and after birth. Look at Her example, a soul striving for union with God, and see in the mirror of Her perfection your duty. The Lord is a jealous God. When He says to man with a voice of fatherly kindness: *Son, give Me thy heart*, His righteous jealousy is commanding, in a spiritual as well as a moral sense: *Do not commit adultery*. He Who gave us a heart is not satisfied with a larger or smaller portion of it: it must all belong to the Master of everything. He does not consider any kind of love to be worthy of Himself which is not based on love of Him. Every enjoyment which we passionately seek for ourselves, every thought directed toward creation, every distraction, is a departure from Him. Only strict vigilance over oneself can lead to blessed union with Him and maintain it: *Keep your heart with all vigilance; for from it flow the springs of life* (Prov. 4:23). The heavenly Bridegroom is betrothed only to wise and chaste virgins, not those sleeping near His bridal chamber. The virgin soul directed only towards God conceives the spiritual life and gives birth to the blessedness of pure contemplation. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*; and where?—in their very heart. A pure soul, just like pure water, receives the living images of the sun and sky.

We will not keep our gaze fixed on those characteristics of the image of the birth of Jesus which might frighten those who wish to imprint them on their own souls, due to their difficulty in imitating. But let us take one more glance at those characteristics in which His Divine glory shone through His humiliation and through which Grace is revealed in our spiritual birth.

At the birth of Christ the Angels proclaim glory to God and peace on earth: at our birth they proclaim the glory of Grace and the peace of man with God. *Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth* (Luke 15:7). Shepherds and wise men come to Christ with piety, in spite of the poverty and obscurity which seemingly separate Him from the whole world. So also he who is united with Christ is united, in Him, with all those who believe in Him, by an indissoluble as well as incomprehensible union. That Spirit which forms from them one community, or rather one body, sometimes unexpectedly, but always in a timely manner, brings them closer to each other, in order for them to mutually edify and learn, comfort and receive comfort, and confess the mercy and glory of God. They offer gifts to Christ: gold, as to a King; incense, as to God; myrrh, as to a deceased of mortals. But did He not promise us that for those who seek the Kingdom of God, *all things shall be added* (Matt. 6:33)? Does He not want to make *us kings and priests unto God and His Father* (Rev. 1:6)? Is not our spiritual birth linked with that life-giving death, after which our life will be hidden with Him in God (cf. Col 3:3)?

O God, Who has given us Thy Son! What does Thou not give us thereby? Grant us only that we may give birth to the Spirit of Christ within ourselves and that we may live His life. Then let *Herod and all Jerusalem be troubled* with us as they were with Him. Let the prince of this age rage and let all the world take up arms: Thou shalt nourish us and with an Angel of Thy counsel Thou shalt lead us to Thy holy mountain. Amen. **Translated from "The Writings of Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomensk" (in Russian), Vol. 1, pp. 16-20. In Orthodox Life vol. 50, no. 6, Nov-Dec 2000, pp. 2-5 <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/89451.htm>**

On the Night of Nativity
St. Ephraim the Syrian

Pure is the present night, in which the Pure One appeared, Who came to purify us! Let our hearing be pure, and the sight of our eyes chaste, and the feeling of the heart holy, and the speech of the mouth sincere!

The present night is the night of reconciliation; therefore, let no one be wroth against his brother and offend him!

This night gave peace to the whole world, and so, let no one threaten. This is the night of the Most Meek One; let no one be cruel!

This is the night of the Humble One; let no one be proud!

Now is the day of joy; let us not take revenge for offences! Now is the day of good will; let us not be harsh. On this day of tranquility, let us not become agitated by anger!

Today God came unto sinners; let not the righteous exalt himself over sinners!

Today the Most Rich One became poor for our sake; let the rich man invite the poor to his table!

Today we received a gift which we did not ask for; let us bestow alms to those who cry out to us and beg!

The present day has opened the door of heaven to our prayers; let us also open our door to those who ask of us forgiveness!

Today the Godhead placed upon Himself the seal of humanity, and humanity has been adorned with the seal of the Godhead!

Christ is born and God is with us!
Archimandrite John (Krestiankin)

Glory to Thee O Lord! Yet again have we reached the bright days of the Nativity of Christ! This feast is one of the great twelve feasts—it has five days of fore-feast and six days of after-feast, and in the divine service books it is called the three-day Pascha. Because of the greatness of the event commemorated, this feast is celebrated more solemnly than all the feasts with the exception of Pascha. St. John Chrysostom calls the day of the Nativity of Christ the most honorable and important of all feasts, the “mother of all feasts”.

The first tidings of this magnificent event in the life of the Earth, the birth of Christ the Savior, were received by the Bethlehem shepherds from the angels. The angel appeared to them in the quiet of night, and proclaimed to all the living: *Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord* (Luke 2:10-11).

My dear ones! Let us also attend to the word of God’s angel. Fear not! The light of knowledge is shown to the world. Fear not! Joy has come down to the world. Christ is born. Christ God came to the world that those who are faithful to Him and love Him would fear nothing and conquer all fear through Him. Fear not! Receive with

faith and love the newborn Christ, and be born in Him, and grow to the measure of age of the children of God, the heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Fear not, little children of God! Our path is true, and our lives have been born in Christ—and shouldn't we then believe in God's promise? *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world* (Matt. 28:20).

I greet you all, all my family in Christ! Those near and far, known and unknown do I greet with the all-encompassing joy of the Nativity of Christ! Christ is born, and God is with us! Amen!

Translation by Nun Cornelia (Rees) Pravoslavie.ru: <http://orthochristian.com/99975.html>

HOMILY ON HOW WE SHOULD GREET THE DAY OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY St. Ambrose of Milan

You know what a great joy, and how such a great assembly of people there be when they celebrate the birthday of an earthly king. How commanders and leaders as well as all the soldiers array themselves in silk garments, girdled in precious, shining gold belts, and hasten in brilliant grandeur to stand before the face of their king. For they know that the joy of the king will multiply when he sees the especial beauty of their adornment, and that the greater his gladness, the greater zeal will they show during his solemnities (the king as a man does not see the heart and judges others' disposition toward him only according to externals. And therefore, whoever loves the king the most will dress for that day in bright clothing). Moreover, because they know that the king is often very generous on his birthday and gives many alms either to his grantees or those of his house of who are poor and under his care, they try beforehand to fill his treasure chests with various riches so that when he wishes to give alms, he might be able to give them generously, and so that his desire to give alms would sooner dry up than his wealth. They do all of this with zeal, because they themselves hope to receive a great reward for it.

Brothers! If the sons of this age, for the sake of temporary honor, greet the birthday of their earthly king with such preparation, then how must we greet the birthday of our eternal King Jesus Christ, who for our zeal toward Him will reward us not with temporary but eternal glory, and vouchsafe us the honor not of an earthly ruler that passes on to his successor, but of a heavenly kingdom, which has no successor? What shall be the reward about which the prophet speaks: *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him* (Is. 64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9)?

With what garments should we adorn ourselves? I say "ourselves", that is, our souls. Because our King Christ does not demand grand clothing but a disposition of soul; He does not look upon the adornment of the body, but upon the hearts that serve Him; He does not marvel at the glitter of corruptible belt girding our loins, but admires invincible chastity, which binds lusts with shame. Thus, let us take care to appear before Him tested in faith, adorned in mercy, well-ordered in the example of our lives. Whoever sincerely loves Christ, let him adorn himself brightly by the keeping of His commandments, so that He would see that we truly believe in Him—for we have appeared in such grandeur during His solemnities—and be all the more gladdened as He sees spiritual purity in us. Let us make our hearts chaste beforehand, let us cleanse our consciences, illumine our spirits, and in purity and incorruptibility let us greet the coming of the All-Holy Lord, so that the birthday of the One Born of the Most Pure Virgin might be celebrated by his chaste servants. Whoever comes on that day impure and defiled does not honor the Nativity of Christ. Although such a person

might be present at the Lord's solemnities in body, in spirit he is far from the Savior. For the impure cannot associate with the holy, the miserly with the merciful, the corrupt with the virginal. And if such a person should enter into association with them, he will cause all the more insult because he does not know himself. Wishing to appear zealous he is in fact audacious, like the man in the Gospel who, when called to the wedding feast, dared to enter into the assembly of the holy without a wedding garment. And while one shone with righteousness, another shone with faith, and a third shone with chastity, he alone, having an impure conscience, aroused only terrible repugnance with his trembling amidst everyone's brilliance. And the more brightly shone the sanctity of those righteous people there, the more obvious was the defilement of the sinner who perhaps would not have created such revulsion had he not appeared amongst the hosts of saints. Therefore, the king's servants bound him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness—not only because he was a sinner, but because as a sinner he claimed the reward reserved for the holy (Mt. 22:11–13).

Thus, in greeting the Nativity of our Lord let us purify ourselves, brothers, from all defilement of sin. Let us fill His treasury with various gifts, so that on this holy day there would be something to comfort strangers, relieve the sorrows of widows, and clothe the needy. For can it be good if in one and the same house there be one servant making merry in silk garments, while another desponds, wearing rough tunics, the former sating himself with food while the other goes hungry in the cold? And what effect will our prayer have when we ask to be delivered from the evil one, but we ourselves do not want to be merciful to our brothers? Let us emulate our Lord. If it pleases Him to make the poor, along with us, participants in heavenly grace, then why shouldn't they participate with us in earthly riches? Brothers in the Mysteries should not be strangers to each other in possessions. We more surely acquire intercessors before the Lord when we feed at our own expense those who will give thanks to God. The poor man who blesses the Lord brings benefit to the one through whose cooperation the name of our Lord and Savior is blessed. The reward of a benefactor is such that he alone shows mercy in his home, but in church he prays to the Lord through the lips of many; and what he would not have dared to ask of God he unexpectedly receives at the intercessions of the many. Glorifying such cooperation, our blessed apostle says: *Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf* (2 Cor. 1:11); and in another passage: *That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost* (Rom. 15:16)! Amen. <https://orthochristian.com/136561.html>

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