

The Feast of the Nativity

Last Updated Saturday, 03 January 2009

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III

Pope of Alexandria & Patriarch of the See of St. Mark

-The 2006 Papal Christmas Message.

Peace on the Feast of the Nativity.

We congratulate you my brethren on the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, to Him be all Glory. We hope for you all on this Feast a joyous year, blessed by God, and that He may bless the whole world.

And on the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, we remember among its many meanings that the angels sang saying, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and goodwill towards men." (Lk 2:14) Today, we hope that our contemplation will be on peace, which God wills for Earth, especially as the world and every person needs peace.

There are three types of peace which each person needs: peace with God, peace with people, and peace of heart.

Peace

with God is that a person lives a life of righteousness and stays far from all sin and evil. Therefore sin is distance from God, and enmity from God and disobedience of His commandments. If man disobeys his God, man loses his peace.

He

who lives in peace with God has a pure heart. And when we speak of peace with God and of purity of heart, we do not imply that man should live in righteousness against his will, but rather, true goodness is what the heart seeks willingly, not that which is imposed on him.

He

who lives in peace with God will naturally live in peace with others, as he does not struggle with others, nor do others struggle with him, he will not fear others, but love them.

We

pray that peace will spread among people and that they may live far from aggression, not encroaching on or abusing others. The peaceful person does not encroach on others, and if he is abused by another, bears with patience, and pardons and forgives. The Lord Jesus commands peace and tolerance, and the Holy Bible says, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good," and also "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; and if he is thirsty, give him a drink." (Rom. 12:20-21).

When

your relationship with God is shaken, you lose your inner peace, and if lusts and desires overcome you, you also lose your inner peace. Thus to live in peace, do not worry about tomorrow.

If

you place your life in your own hands, you will be troubled; and if you place your life in the hands of others, you will be troubled even more; but if you believe that it is in the hands of God, you will find rest.

Those who believe in God's planning for their lives, are not troubled, but live continually with inner peace, which fills their hearts. The person with peace of heart, does not fear evil, for he says to the Lord as David the Prophet says, "If I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." (Ps 23:4)

The faithful person lives in peace, for God exists and acts and manages all, and is the protector and the helper. However, the one who has lost peace, even imagines difficulties when they do not exist, and even though there is Divine power surrounding him, he does not recognize it, and that is his great crisis.

If you have an accepted prayer, you shall live in peace, and you will feel that since you have placed your troubles in prayer before God, and that He has received your case and surrounds it with His abundant mercies, He will lift your sufferings.

And in the beginning of this new year, we pray that God intervenes and solves the problems of individuals and nations, even if they seem complicated and unsolvable. "For that which is impossible with men, is possible with God."

May this year be a blessed one,

Pope Shenouda III

January 7, 2006