

## Papal Message for the Nativity 2008

Last Updated Wednesday, 06 January 2010

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III

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

The 2008 Papal Christmas Message.

Peace on the Feast of the Nativity.

My beloved children in the lands of immigration, Clergy and Laity, It gives me joy to congratulate you on the Glorious Feast of Nativity and with the start of the New Year. We pray that it is blessed and joyful in the life of each of us.

The birth of the Lord is full of deep spiritual contemplations; we hope that they may be a lesson to us all, having its effects and results.

Firstly, He came down to us, to visit us, reconcile us and save us. One of the fathers the saints said: "With sin there was contention between man and his creator, and since man could not ascend to God and reconcile with Him, God came down to man." Yes, He came down and continues to knock on the door of the human heart so it may open for Him.

In His coming down, He "made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant ... and being found in appearance as a man..." (Philippians 2, 8:7) He did not desire to frighten us with His Divinity, but attracted us with His humility. He also attracted us with His love, as He went about doing good. And this is another lesson for us.

In His Nativity, He was born in an amazing simplicity: He did not come down upon the wings of the Cherubim, engulfed by a choir of angels. Instead He was born from a poor orphan virgin, who was in the care of a simple carpenter. His birth was in a manger, on a day not known to anyone, but was proclaimed to some shepherds, and then visited by three Magi representing the estranged Gentiles... It is a mixture of simplicity and humility, which was a third lesson for us to be far from outer appearances.

The Lord Christ lived an alienated childhood far from being famous. A part of this childhood was threatened by the sword of Herod, and in a part of this childhood, He was a stranger in the land of Egypt, although He blessed it. As for His youth days, we do not know anything about it. And the title that the Jews gave Him was "the carpenter's son." (Matthew 13:55)

When He started His ministry, He lived for more than three years without a position of leadership in the Jewish community. The title that He was known by among His beloved was "Teacher." He did not possess a house for the ministry, He did not even have a place to lay His head (Luke 9:58). He sometimes preached from the mountain, or in the wilderness, or in the fields, or upon the sea shore...

His strength was in His personality and not in any appearances that surrounded Him; loved by the people and envied by the leaders, but He was a source of love to all, being compassionate upon everyone in need, every sick person and upon those tormented by evil spirits.

He had disciples who were also simple; and He filled their hearts with love, filled their minds with knowledge, granted them His Holy Spirit, and also granted them gifts.

This is The Christ whom we celebrate His birth, and we are proud that His Name has been called upon us. Blessed is the day of His birth, and may we also celebrate His characteristics as well. Finally, be all well and healthy in the Lord, absolved from His Holy Spirit.

May this year be a blessed one,

Pope Shenouda III

January 7, 2008