



Office of the Bishop
312 Garfield Street
Johnstown, PA 15906

Protocol No. 19/2016 CHRISTMAS ARCHPASTORAL LETTER

December 25, 2016 / January 7, 2017

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

Dear Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On this glorious Feast of the Nativity of Christ we celebrate a truly a wondrous event in which God, in His infinite and marvelous grace, became man bringing us enduring hope, newness of life, and eternal salvation. The Son of God, the Lord of Glory and King of kings who upholds the universe by His word of power, became man so that we human beings might be redeemed, renewed, united with Him, and become fellow citizens with the Saints and members of God's kingdom.

The magnitude and depth of the event of the Nativity of Christ are impossible to grasp, but the message is clear and true. It is a message of grace, hope, and salvation to all humanity and to all the created order. It is a message which we both celebrate and share on this sacred day, an invitation to "come and see" what our loving Creator and God has done for us.

On the night of the Nativity, the angels appeared in the glory of God and announced the birth of Christ to the Shepherds. In response they said, "Let us go...and see this thing that has happened." Accepting the invitation to participate in this glorious event, they came and saw the newborn Christ, and becoming amazed by what God had done for our salvation, went away glorifying and praising Him for all that they had seen and heard (Luke 2:8 – 20).

The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America.
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Following the Nativity, Wise Men in the East saw a mysterious star and following it came seeking the King who was born in Judea. Upon learning of the place of the birth of the Lord, they came and saw the Christ child, offered Him gifts, and worshipped Him. Responding to the invitation presented to them in the sign of the star, they came and encountered the One who would be a great ruler of His people as foretold by the prophets (Matthew 2:1 - 12).

As the Shepherds and Wise Men received the invitation to “come and see” the superb miracle of the Incarnation of God, we are also invited to “come and see” Christ and the great work He has done for our salvation. On this day we “come and see” the bright light of truth and life shining through the darkness and despair of our violent and war torn world. On this day we hear a message of hope, grace, and peace. We come to Christ and see justice, holiness, and love.

Today may all of us, Priests, Panis, Deacons, Sub-Deacons, Readers, Parish Officers, Parishioners, Friends, and Supporters of our God-protected American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese experience the joy and wonders of the Shepherds and the awe and respect of the Three Wise Men at the arrival of the Messiah, our new born King. Christ is Born!

Greetings from Johnstown with much love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Bishop Gregory". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+Bishop Gregory of Nyssa