

Спасо-Вознесенский Православный Храм

Holy Ascension Orthodox Church
of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad
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Christ is born, glorify Him!

With these words, we greet each other on the occasion of the feast day of the Nativity of Christ.

From the very day of the Nativity of Christ, a new Christian era began for mankind. A new enumeration began, because mankind in its existence was as new. But that was only outwardly.

The spiritual countenance of the entire world changed, but that did not occur immediately and it took three centuries of horrible persecution of Christianity filled with its own blood, which submerged in itself the ancient pagan world. Mankind emerged changed and renewed from this blood bath, as if baptized in that terrifying baptismal font. Christ's Church and none other eliminated the enslavement imposed by pagan regimes and proclaimed freedom of worship and the equality of all before the law. Most importantly, it was the grace of the Holy Spirit which transformed the very heart of mankind. The horrible coliseums were abolished, where people demanded that other people kill each other, where people let loose wild animals to kill other people. These coliseums were abolished, because they became repugnant to the hearts of mankind, because Christ, the God of love, mercy and compassion entered into them.

These days, we hear of atrocities, some quite cruel, which occur in various corners of the world, but such cruelty and inequity will never again be legitimized and become the norm of our lives. Christ was triumphant once and for all and there are no forces on earth that can take away that victory. If our hearts tighten at the sight of suffering of all kinds, if we cannot look at wounds or blood without wincing, if we cannot see the suffering of innocent children born and unborn without shuddering, we have God to thank for that. These gifts were brought by Christ. Let us glorify Him and thank Him for the kindness shown to us.

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+Joseph
Bishop of Washington, D.C.
Vicar of the Eastern-American and New York Diocese

Nativity of Christ, 2009