

## **Nativity Epistle of His Eminence Agafangel, Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York**

Honorable prelates, dear pastors, brothers and sisters!

The light fades and the darkness deepens – we draw near to the end of the Seventh Day. There is no clear or noticeable difference in the edifice of the world. The economic crisis is discussed everywhere, but no one sees the spiritual crisis, which is far more ruinous and noteworthy – a crisis from which there is no way out. The current spiritual crisis, ignored by many, is unvanquishable, as there is no one capable of defeating it. The more spiritual exemplars of mankind have passed away into eternity and those who could replace them, who would be their equals in virtue, are nowhere to be found. And where would one find them, as the religious and cultural environment from which they would emerge has become impoverished. We can only become used to the spiritual crisis that has overtaken us and try to learn to live with it somehow, if God allows us the time to do so.

Many of the symbols of the past have been swallowed up by the gloom and disappear as if they never existed; nations, culture lose their meaning and populations forfeit their ethos. Globalism mixes it all together into one featureless lump. The borders of the Local Churches become indistinct, become incomprehensible reasons for ancient disagreements and disputes. Superstitions spread everywhere, arising from a cultivation of commonplace reason, emotions and willpower, the characteristic features of the illusory idol of democracy.

In these days, God clearly reveals to us Christians the futility of this world. In this dying world, where once magnificent values that seemed eternal become broken and unwanted potshards, the Person of Christ becomes more distinct and glorious. He is born in hearts as a kind of divine Light, which slowly takes on the features of an Image. For many of the faithful, this is how His Nativity expresses itself. The days drew near to the end, when He will appear before our eyes, flashing throughout the sky brighter than any lightening and shining like a blinding sun. This light will strike fear in this world, but it will show unbelievable mercy to those in whom this light dwelt.

My wish is that we all do not remain idle observers, but humble partakers of the Nativity of Christ, so that the Incarnation of God serves as our birth into life eternal.

*+Metropolitan Agafangel*

*First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad*

*The coming year of 2009 from the Nativity of Christ*