

**Nativity Epistle  
of His Eminence  
Archbishop George of Sydney,  
Australia & New Zealand**

*Nativity of Christ, 2024/2025*

*And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and seeing this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger. And when they had seen Him, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. (Luke 2: 15-20)*

**Beloved in the Lord, Clergy and Faithful of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese!**

As we celebrate the Blessed Nativity of Our Saviour each year, we are always drawn to this miraculous scene when the invisible spiritual world was revealed to men. Hosts of angels appeared to simple shepherds in the fields outside of Bethlehem, glorifying our Creator, singing praises to Him, and proclaiming His incarnation. They announced to the shepherds, and through them to all of mankind, the birth of the Saviour, Christ the Lord, telling them how they would find Him wrapped in swaddling clothes. The shepherds then hastened to see the Lord and worship Him, and went away glorifying God and spreading the good news about what they had seen and heard. We likewise are all called not only to come and see the Lord and worship Him, but also to go forth and proclaim the good news of the Saviour's birth. We should be proclaiming the good news of the Gospel not only in word, but also in deed, by living the Gospel. Just as the star led the Magi to Bethlehem (according to St. John Chrysostom the star was actually an angel), our good works should lead people to the Truth, as our Saviour Himself instructs us: *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt 5: 16)*. We must not be swallowed up by the world lying in darkness, but make every effort to be in the world but not of the world, consciously rejecting the mindset of today's society. Like good and faithful servants we should increase the talents bestowed on us from the Lord, using them to spread the Gospel. May we not bury our talents in the ground, as we wait for our Lord to appear. May we not be the fulfillment to the words of our Saviour: "when the Son of man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). I ask all of the faithful to

make an effort to extend a helping hand to all those in need, giving alms to the poor, donations to the churches, helping them to bring the Word of God and grace to the world, helping others in whatever way you can, thereby showing love to your fellow man and fulfilling the commandment of God. *A new commandment I give unto you. That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*” (John 13: 34-35)

I greet you all, brothers and sisters, with the Feast of the Nativity of Christ our Saviour!

Amen.



+ Archbishop George

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Australian & New Zealand Diocese  
of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia