

Nativity Epistle 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters, faithful Sons and Daughters of Christ's Church, beloved Christians,

Christ is born!

The pre-eternal God has become a creature, taking flesh from the most pure Virgin. These good and salvific tidings are brought to the shepherds by angels; to the magi, by a star; to Joseph, through a dream; to Symeon, by a voice from within; and to us, by the Holy Gospel.

How this came to be we do not and cannot understand, for it is a great mystery comprehensible neither to the minds of men nor of angels, neither now nor then. We do not understand it, but accept it and know it, or at least should know it, not just with a formal knowledge of the mind, but with the living knowledge of a living faith.

This mystery of the Divine Incarnation is at the same time the mystery of Christ's Church, which is Christ's mystical body, in which the mystery of the Incarnation continues to the end of eternity. It is a mystery in which every believing Christian must participate, so that it continue in our hearts making them a spiritual Bethlehem, for we are all called to live in Christ, and to have the living Christ live in us.

Outside Christ's Church, and without Christ in our hearts, the celebration of Christmas would be at best the hollow commemoration of an historic event, or worse, some kind of commercialized irony, bearing no relationship with either the historical or the eternal Christ, a Bethlehem locked and able neither to see the star nor hear the angels.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us celebrate Christ's Nativity as true sons and daughters of His Church, let us sing praises with the angels, let us keep watch with the shepherds and let us worship with the magi, that the Divine Love become incarnate in our hearts and live in us, and we in Him.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!



John, Bishop of Caracas and South America