

Πατριαρχική Απόδειξις ἐπί τοῖς Χριστουγέννοις (2018).

Ἀριθμ. Πρωτ. 1099

ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΙΚΗ ΑΠΟΔΕΙΞΙΣ  
ΕΠΙ ΤΟΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΟΙΣ

**+ Β Α Ρ Θ Ο Λ Ο Μ Α Ι Ο Σ**  
ΕΛΕΩι ΘΕΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΩΣ,  
ΝΕΑΣ ΡΩΜΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗΣ  
ΠΑΝΤΙ ΤΩι ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΙ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ  
ΧΑΡΙΝ, ΕΛΕΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΡΗΝΗΝ  
ΠΑΡΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΝ ΒΗΘΛΕΕΜ ΓΕΝΝΗΘΕΝΤΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ

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Ἰερώτατοι καί Θεοφιλέστατοι ἀδελφοί, προσφιλέστατα τέκνα ἐν Κυρίῳ,

Δοξάζομεν τόν Πανάγιον καί Πανοικτίρμονα Θεόν, διότι ἠξιώθημεν καί ἐφέτος νά φθάσωμεν εἰς τήν πανέορτον ἡμέραν τῶν Χριστουγέννων, τήν ἑορτήν τῆς σαρκώσεως τοῦ προαιωνίου Υἱοῦ καί Λόγου τοῦ Θεοῦ «δι' ἡμᾶς τούς ἀνθρώπους καί διά τήν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν». Διά τοῦ «ἀεὶ μυστηρίου» καί «μεγάλου θαύματος» τῆς θείας Ἐνανθρωπήσεως, τό «μέγα τραῦμα», ὁ ἐν σκότει καί σκιᾷ καθήμενος ἄνθρωπος, καθίσταται «υἱός φωτός καί υἱός ἡμέρας»<sup>1</sup>, ἀνοίγει δι' αὐτόν ἡ εὐλογημένη ὁδός τῆς κατὰ χάριν θεώσεως. Ἐν τῷ θεανδρικῷ μυστηρίῳ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καί διά τῶν ἱερῶν μυστηρίων τῆς γεννᾶται καί μορφοῦται ὁ Χριστός εἰς τήν ψυχήν καί τήν ὑπαρξίν μας. «Ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος», θεολογεῖ ὁ ἅγιος Μάξιμος ὁ Ὁμολογητής, «ἐφάπαξ κατὰ σάρκα γεννηθείς, ἀεὶ γεννᾶται θέλων κατὰ πνεῦμα διά φιλανθρωπίαν τοῖς θέλουσι καί γίνεται βρέφος, ἑαυτόν ἐν ἐκείνοις διαπλάττων ταῖς ἀρεταῖς καί τοσοῦτον φαινόμενος, ὅσον χωρεῖν ἐπίσταται τόν δεχόμενον»<sup>2</sup>. Δέν εἶναι «Θεός - Ἰδέα», ὡς ὁ θεός τῶν φιλοσόφων, οὔτε Θεός κεκλεισμένος εἰς τήν ἀπόλυτον ὑπερβατικότητά του καί ἀπροσπέλαστος, ἀλλά εἶναι ὁ «Ἐμμανουήλ», ὁ «Θεός μεθ' ἡμῶν»<sup>3</sup>, εὐρίσκεται ἐγγύτερον εἰς ἡμᾶς, ἀπό ὅσον ἡμεῖς οἱ ἴδιοι εἰς τόν ἑαυτόν μας, εἶναι «καί ἡμῶν αὐτῶν συγγενέστερος»<sup>4</sup>.

Ἡ πίστις εἰς τήν ἀπρόσιτον καί ἄσαρκον Θεότητα δέν μεταμορφώνει τήν ζωήν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, δέν αἶρει τήν πόλωσιν μεταξύ ὕλης καί πνεύματος, δέν γεφυρώνει τό χάσμα μεταξύ οὐρανοῦ καί γῆς. Ἡ Σάρκωσις τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου εἶναι ἡ φανέρωσις τῆς ἀληθείας περί Θεοῦ καί ἀνθρώπου, ἡ ὁποία σώζει τό ἀνθρώπινον γένος ἀπό τούς σκοτεινοὺς λαβυρίνθους, τόσον τοῦ ὕλισμοῦ καί τοῦ ἀνθρωπομονισμοῦ, ὅσον καί τοῦ ἰδεαλισμοῦ καί τοῦ δυϊσμοῦ. Ἡ καταδίκη τοῦ νεστοριανισμοῦ καί τοῦ μονοφυσιτισμοῦ ἐκ μέρους τῆς Ἐκκλησίας σηματοδοτεῖ τήν ἀπόρριψιν δύο καθολικωτέρων τάσεων τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ψυχῆς, καί δὴ ἀφ' ἑνός τῆς ἀπολυτοποιήσεως τοῦ ἀνθρωποκεντρισμοῦ καί ἀφ' ἑτέρου τῆς ἐξιδανικεύσεως τῆς ἰδεαλιστικῆς ἐκδοχῆς τῆς ζωῆς καί τῆς ἀληθείας, παρεκκλίσεων ἰδιαιτέρως διαδεδομένων καί εἰς τήν ἐποχήν μας.

Ὁ σύγχρονος «νεστοριανισμός» ἐκφράζεται ὡς πνεῦμα ἐκκοσμικεύσεως, ὡς ἐπιστημονισμός καί ἀπόλυτος προτεραιότης τῆς χρηστικῆς γνώσεως, ὡς ἀπόλυτος ἰδιονομία τῆς οἰκονομίας, ὡς αὐτοσωτηρική ἀλαζονεία καί ἀθεΐα, ὡς ὁ «μὴ πολιτισμός» τοῦ ἀτομοκεντρισμοῦ καί τοῦ εὐδαμονισμοῦ, ὡς νομικισμός

καί ἠθικισμός, ὡς «τέλος τῆς αἰδοῦς» καί ταύτισις τῆς θυσιαστικῆς ἀγάπης καί τῆς μετανοίας μέ τήν λεγομένην «ἠθικήν τῶν ἀδυνάτων», Ὁ «μονοφυσιτισμός» πάλιν ἐκπροσωπεῖται σήμερον ἀπό τάς τάσεις δαιμονοποιήσεως τοῦ σώματος καί τοῦ φυσικοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἀπό τόν πουριτανισμόν καί τά σύνδρομα «καθαρότητος», τήν ἐσωστρεφεῖ ἄκαρπον πνευματικότητα καί τούς ποικίλους μυστικισμούς, ἀπό τήν περιφρόνησιν τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου, τῆς τέχνης καί τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ, ἀπό τήν ἄρνησιν τοῦ διαλόγου καί τήν ἀπόρριψιν τοῦ διαφοροτικοῦ, μέ ἐπικίνδυνον ἐκφραστήν, ἐν ὀνόματι τῆς «μόνης καί ἀποκλειστικῆς ἀληθείας», τόν θρησκευτικόν φονταμενταλισμόν, ὁ ὁποῖος τρέφεται ἀπό ἀπολυτοποιήσεις καί ἀπορρίψεις καί τροφοδοτεῖ τήν βίαν καί τήν διάσπασιν. Εἶναι προφανές ὅτι, τόσον ἡ νεστοριανίζουσα ἀποθέωσις τοῦ κόσμου, ὅσον καί ἡ μονοφυσιτίζουσα δαιμονοποίησις του, ἀφήνουν τόν κόσμον καί τήν ἱστορίαν, τόν πολιτισμόν καί τούς πολιτισμούς, ἐκτεθειμένους εἰς τάς δυνάμεις τοῦ «νῦν αἰῶνος», καί παγιώνουν τοιουτοτρόπως τήν αὐτονόμησιν καί τά ἀδιέξοδά των.

Ἡ χριστιανική πίστις εἶναι ἡ βεβαιότης τῆς σωτηρίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπό τοῦ Θεοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης, ὁ ὁποῖος προσέλαβε φιλανθρώπως τήν ἡμετέραν φύσιν καί ἐχαρίσατο ἡμῖν πάλιν τό διά τῆς πτώσεως ἀπολεσθέν «καθ' ὁμοίωσιν», ἰκανώσας ἡμᾶς εἰς τήν κατ' ἀλήθειαν ζωήν ἐν τῷ Σώματι Αὐτοῦ, τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ. Σύνολος ἡ ζωή τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἐκφράζει τό μυστήριον τῆς θεανθρωπότητος. Ὁ Θεάνθρωπος Σωτήρ ἀνέλαβεν «ἐκκλησίας σάρκα»<sup>5</sup> καί ἔδειξε, «πρῶτος καί μόνος», «τόν ἀληθινόν ἄνθρωπον καί τέλειον καί τρόπων καί ζωῆς καί τῶν ἄλλων ἕνεκα πάντων»<sup>6</sup>. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι ὁ τόπος τῆς «κοινῆς σωτηρίας», τῆς «κοινῆς ἐλευθερίας» καί τῆς ἐλπίδος τῆς «κοινῆς βασιλείας», εἶναι ὁ τρόπος τῆς βιώσεως τῆς ἐλευθεροποιοῦ ἀληθείας, ὁ πυρήν τῆς ὁποίας εἶναι τό ἀληθεύειν ἐν ἀγάπῃ. Ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτή ὑπερβαίνει τά ὅρια τῆς ἀπλῆς ἀνθρωπιστικῆς δράσεως, καθ' ὅτι ἡ πηγὴ καί τό πρότυπον αὐτῆς εἶναι ἡ ὑπερβαίνουσα τόν ἀνθρώπινον λόγον θεία φιλανθρωπία. «Ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τόν υἱόν αὐτοῦ τόν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ Θεός εἰς τόν κόσμον ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ. Ἐν τούτῳ ἐστίν ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠγαπήσαμεν τόν Θεόν, ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτός ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς ... Ἀγαπητοί, εἰ οὕτως ὁ Θεός ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καί ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν»<sup>7</sup>. Ὅπου ὑπάρχει ἀγάπη, ἐκεῖ εἶναι παρῶν ὁ Θεός.

Αὐτή ἡ σωτηριώδης ἀλήθεια πρέπει νά ἐκφράζεται καί εἰς τόν τρόπον μέ τόν ὁποῖον ἐορτάζομεν τό σεπτόν Γενέθλιον τοῦ ἐπισκεψαμένου ἡμᾶς ἐξ ὕψους Σωτήρος ἡμῶν. Ἡ ἐορτή εἶναι πάντοτε «πλήρωμα χρόνου», καιρός αὐτογνωσίας, εὐχαριστίας διά τό μέγεθος τῆς θείας φιλανθρώπου ἀγάπης, μαρτυρία τῆς ἀληθείας τῆς θεανθρωπότητος καί τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐλευθερίας. Ὁ χριστοτερπῆς ἐορτασμός τῆς σαρκώσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου εἶναι μία πρᾶξις ἀντιστάσεως εἰς τήν ἐκκοσμικέυσιν, εἰς τόν ἀποχρωματισμόν τῆς ἐορτῆς καί τήν μετατροπὴν τῆς εἰς «Χριστοῦγεννα χωρίς Χριστόν» καί εἰς πανήγυριν τοῦ Ἐχειν, τοῦ καταναλωτισμοῦ καί τῆς ματαιοδοξίας, καί δὴ εἰς ἓνα κόσμον πλήρη κοινωνικῶν ἐντάσεων, ἀξιολογικῶν ἀνατροπῶν καί συγχύσεως, βίας καί ἀδικίας, ὅπου τό «παιδίον Ἰησοῦς» εὐρίσκεται καί πάλιν ἀντιμέτωπον μέ ἄτεγκτα συμφέροντα ποικιλωνύμων ἐξουσιῶν.

Τιμώτατοι ἀδελφοί καί πεφιλημένα τέκνα,

Γενεά παρέρχεται καί γενεά ἔρχεται, καί αἱ ἐπερχόμεναι ἐξελίξεις εἶναι κατ' ἄνθρωπον δυσκόλως προβλέψιμοι. Ἡ γνησία πίστις, ὅμως, δέν ἔχει διλήμματα. Ὁ Λόγος ἐγένετο σάρξ, ἡ «ἀλήθεια ἦλθε» καί «παρέδραμεν ἡ σκιά», μετέχομεν ἤδη τῆς Βασιλείας ἐν τῇ πορείᾳ πρὸς τὴν τελείωσιν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς ἐνσάρκου Θείας Οἰκονομίας. Ἔχομεν ἀκλόνητον τὴν βεβαιότητα, ὅτι τὸ μέλλον ἀνήκει εἰς τὸν Χριστόν, ὁ Ὅποιος εἶναι «χθές καί σήμερον ὁ αὐτός καί εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας»<sup>8</sup>, ὅτι ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶναι καί θά παραμένῃ τόπος ἁγιασμοῦ καί ἐνθέου βιοτῆς, ἀνακαινίσεως τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καί τοῦ κόσμου, πρόγευσις τῆς δόξης τῆς Βασιλείας, ὅτι θά συνεχίση «νά δίδῃ τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν μαρτυρίαν» καί «νά διανέμῃ ἐν τῇ οἰκουμένῃ τὰ δῶρα τοῦ Θεοῦ: τὴν ἀγάπην Του, τὴν εἰρήνην, τὴν δικαιοσύνην, τὴν καταλλαγὴν, τὴν δύναμιν τῆς Ἀναστάσεως καί τὴν προσδοκίαν τῆς αἰωνιότητος»<sup>9</sup>. Τὸ σύγχρονον ἰδεολόγημα περὶ «μεταχριστιανικῆς» ἐποχῆς εἶναι ἄτοπον. «Μετὰ Χριστόν», τὰ πάντα εἶναι, καί μένουσιν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, «ἐν Χριστῷ».

Κλίνοντες εὐσεβοφρόνως τὰ γόνατα ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ Βρέφους τῆς Βηθλεέμ καί τῆς βρεφοκρατούσης Παναγίας Μητρὸς Αὐτοῦ, καί προσκυνοῦντες τὸν ἐνανθρωπήσαντα «παντέλειον Θεόν», ἀπονέμομεν, ἐκ τοῦ ἀκοιμήτου Φαναρίου, τοῖς ἀνά τὴν οἰκουμένην τέκνοις τῆς Ἁγίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ Μεγάλης Ἐκκλησίας τὴν Πατριαρχικὴν ἡμῶν εὐλογίαν ἐπὶ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Δωδεκαημέρῳ, εὐχόμενοι ὑγιεινόν, ἀγλαόκαρπον καί εὐφρόσυνον τὸν νέον ἐνιαυτὸν τῆς χρηστότητος τοῦ Κυρίου.

Χριστούγεννα ,βιή'  
† Ὁ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως  
διάπυρος πρὸς Θεόν εὐχέτης πάντων ὑμῶν

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<sup>1</sup> Α' Θεσσ. ε', 5.

<sup>2</sup> Μαξίμου Ὁμολογητοῦ Κεφάλαια διάφορα θεολογικά τε καί οἰκονομικά, PG 90, 1181.

πρὸβλ. Ματθ. α', 23

<sup>3</sup> Νικολάου Καβάσιλα, Περί τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ζωῆς, ΣΤ', PG 150, 660.

<sup>4</sup> Ἰωάννου Χρυσοστόμου, Ὁμιλία πρὸ τῆς ἐξορίας, PG 52, 429.

<sup>5</sup> Νικολάου Καβάσιλα, Περί τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ζωῆς, Στ', PG 150, 680.

<sup>6</sup> Α' Ἰωάν. δ', 9-11.

<sup>7</sup> Ἐβρ. ιγ', 8.

<sup>8</sup> Ἐγκύκλιος τῆς Ἁγίας καί Μεγάλης Συνόδου τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας (Κρήτη 2016), Προοίμιον.

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*Ἀναγνωσθήτω ἐπ' ἐκκλησίας κατὰ τὴν Θεῖαν Λειτουργίαν τῆς ἑορτῆς τῶν Χριστουγέννων, μετὰ τὸ Ἱερόν Εὐαγγέλιον.*

Patriarchal Proclamation of Christmas (2018).

Prot. No. 1099

PATRIARCHAL PROCLAMATION  
FOR CHRISTMAS

**+ B A R T H O L O M E W**

By God's Mercy Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and  
Ecumenical Patriarch

To the Plenitude of the Church

Grace, Mercy and Peace from the Savior Christ Born in Bethlehem

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Venerable brothers and beloved children in the Lord,

We glorify the Most-Holy and All-Merciful God, that we are again deemed worthy this year to reach the festive day of Christmas, the feast of the pre-eternal Son and Word of God's Incarnation "for us and for our salvation." Through the "eternal mystery" and "great miracle" of the divine Incarnation, the "great wound," namely humankind sitting in darkness and shadow, is rendered into "children of light and day,"<sup>1</sup> while the blessed road of deification by grace is opened for us. In the theandric mystery of the Church and through her holy sacraments, Christ is born and takes shape in our soul and existence. Maximus the Confessor theologizes that "the Word of God, though born once in the flesh, is ever willing to be born spiritually in those who desire Him. Thus, He becomes an infant and fashions Himself in us by means of the virtues; indeed, He reveals Himself to the extent that we are capable of receiving Him."<sup>2</sup> God is not an abstract "idea," like the god of the philosophers, or an unapproachable God enclosed in absolute transcendence. He is "Emmanuel," "God with us,"<sup>3</sup> closer to us than we are to ourselves, "more akin to us than our very own selves."<sup>4</sup>

Faith in the inaccessible and fleshless Divinity does not transform our life; it does not remove the polarization between matter and spirit; nor does it bridge the gap between heaven and earth. The Incarnation of the Divine Word is the revelation of truth regarding God and humankind, which saves the human race from the dark labyrinths of materialism and anthropomorphism, as well as from idealism and dualism. The Church's condemnation of nestorianism and monophysitism signals the rejection of two broader tendencies of the human soul: on the one hand rendering anthropocentrism absolute, and on the other idolizing an idealistic understanding of life and truth, both of which are especially widespread deviations in our age.

Contemporary "nestorianism" is expressed as a spirit of secularization, as scientism and the absolute prioritization of utilitarian knowledge, as the absolute autonomy of economy, as self-saving arrogance and atheism, as the "non-civilization" of individualism and eudemonism, as legalism and moralism, as the "end of decency" and identification of sacrificial love and repentance with the so-called "morality of the weak." By the same token, "monophysitism" is today represented by tendencies to demonize the body and natural man, by puritanism and the syndromes of "purity," by fruitless introverted spirituality and various mysticisms,

by disregarding the intellect, art and civilization, by denying dialogue and rejecting differences, with the dangerous expresser—supposedly in the name of the “one and only truth”—namely a religious fundamentalism nurtured by absolutism and rejections, while feeding violence and division. It is evident that both a nestorianizing deification of the world and a monophysitizing demonization of it leave the world and history, civilizations and cultures, exposed to the powers of the “present age,” cementing their autonomy and impasses.

Christian faith is the certainty of our salvation by the God of love, who graciously assumed our nature and once again granted us “the likeness” lost through the fall, making us worthy of true life in His Body, the Church. The theandric mystery is expressed throughout the entirety of life in the Church. The Incarnate Savior received “the flesh of the Church”<sup>5</sup> and showed, “first and alone,” “the true man, who is perfect on account of both character and life as well as all other aspects.”<sup>6</sup> The Church of Christ is the place of “common salvation,” “common freedom” and hope in the “common kingdom.” It is the way of living the liberating truth, the core of which is expressing the truth in love. This love transcends the boundaries of mere human action, because its source and prototype lie in divine philanthropy, which transcends human reason. “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us ... Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”<sup>7</sup> God is present wherever love exists.

This saving truth must also be expressed in the way we celebrate the sacred Nativity of our Savior, who visited us from on high. A feast is always a “fullness of time,” a time of self-knowledge, of thanksgiving for the magnitude of divine philanthropic love, of witness to the truth of the theandric mystery and of freedom in Christ. The Christ-pleasing celebration of the Divine Word’s Incarnation is an act of resistance against secularization, against discoloration of the feast and its conversion into a “Christmas without Christ,” as well as against a celebration of Having, of consumerism and vanity—indeed, into a world filled with social tensions, reversal and confusion of values, of violence and injustice, where the “Jesus child” is once again faced with the inexorable interests of numerous, multifaceted powers.

Honorable brothers and beloved children,

Generations come and pass, while forthcoming developments are difficult to foresee. Genuine faith, though, does not face dilemmas. The Word became flesh, the “truth has come” and “darkness has subsided.” We already participate in the Kingdom while still on our journey toward the completion of the incarnate Divine Economy. We possess the unshakeable certainty that the future belongs to Christ, Who is “the same yesterday and today and forever;”<sup>8</sup> that the Church of Christ is and shall remain a place of holiness and godliness, a renewal of man and world, a foretaste of the glory of the Kingdom; that it will continue “to give the witness of the Gospel” “to distribute the gifts of God in the world: His love, peace, justice, and reconciliation, the power of resurrection and expectation of eternity.”<sup>9</sup> The contemporary ideology of some “post-Christian” age is baseless. “After Christ,” everything is and remains “in Christ” to the ages.

We humbly kneel before the Divine Infant of Bethlehem and His All- Holy Mother, who holds Him in her arms, while venerating the Incarnate “most perfect God,” and bestow upon the children of the Holy and Great Church of Christ throughout the world—from the ever-vigilant Phanar—our Patriarchal blessing for the Holy Twelve Days of Christmas, wishing you a healthy, fruitful and joyous new year in the Lord’s favor.

Christmas 2018  
+ Bartholomew of Constantinople  
Your fervent supplicant before God

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. 5:5.

<sup>2</sup> Maximus the Confessor, *Capita theologica et oeconomica*, PG 90, 1181.

<sup>3</sup> See Matt. 1:23.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ*, VI, PG 150, 660.

<sup>5</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homily on exile*, PG 52, 429.

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ*, VI, PG 150, 680.

<sup>7</sup> 1 John 4:9-11.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. 13:8.

<sup>9</sup> Encyclical of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church (Crete 2016), Preamble.

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*To be read in church during the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Christmas, following the Holy Gospel.*

24/12/2018