

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

CHRISTMAS ENCYCLICAL 2017

STYLIANOS

By the grace of God
Archbishop of Australia
To all the Clergy and devout faithful
of our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese

*“Come believers, let us see the place
where Christ has been born,
let us therefore follow
to where the star is proceeding.”*

Brother concelebrants and children in Christ,

The message of the Gospel of Christ is not vague and cloudy fiction. It is light and life and it comes to shed light, to give life and to renew “those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death” (cf. Lk 1:79).

It is for this reason that the proclamation of the Incarnation of God is a knife that enters fully alight into the History of the world. And it inevitably separates humanity into believers and non-believers, into fighters willing to fight until death and those ambivalent of dying.

It is for this reason that the proclamation of Christ comes not without suffering. It cannot go hand in hand and coexist together with old customs and values “as though nothing great had taken place.” On the contrary, the Christian message is painful precisely because it is concrete, and it is addressed in a particular context. The proclamation of Christ is therefore definitive and decisive.

It changes not only the appearance of the world. Above all, it changes the future of the world. It is a radical transubstantiation of the postulates and possibilities of History. It does not simply stop people from being animal-like, prudently reinstating them within their proper boundaries and inspiring them with the hope and optimism of *deification by grace*.

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How fictitious, however, do all these things sound, Sisters and Brothers, in the night and in the confusion of the world!

The ploys of the evil one are so misleading that constant re-examination is necessary, our Christian attributes and life are in constant need of verification. For this reason:

**“Come believers, let us see the place
where Christ has been born”.**

Come, let us search! Come, let us see. Come let us no longer verify the facts of the Cave, but those of contemporary life and society which still bear a Christian name. Does Christ exist within us? Does He exist within our life? In our outlook? In our education? In our legislation? In our art? In our sorrow and in our joy?

How much of Christ therefore exists in all these things, if we examine ourselves as individuals, or as a collective, as family, society and as Church?

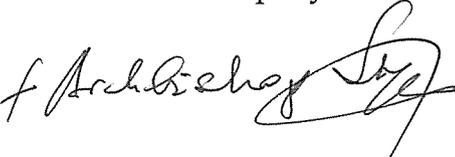
This spiritual and profound measuring will be our salvation. Because Christ, who in becoming incarnate is a child, did not come to judge, but to save the world.

Wherever we find Christ present in our institutions and in our establishments, in our programs and in our aspirations, there will we be able to say to ourselves and others unreservedly:

**“Let us therefore follow
to where the star is proceeding”.**

Let us hope that, *in everything* that is at our disposal on each occasion, that we will identify *those things that are to our advantage*. With Christ, who is alive and remains to the ages, as our only legitimate criterion. Amen!

With fervent prayers



Archbishop STYLIANOS

Christmas 2017