

My Beloved Ones,

Every December 25<sup>th</sup> we are called to celebrate Christmas, the Nativity of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord humbled himself in taking on a human form, because our forefathers, Adam and Eve, disobeyed Him. As a result of this disobedience, humanity was separated from Paradise. But out of love for us, our Father sent His Son down to earth, so that we might be uplifted.

Unfortunately, for some, this fact has become a historical event or a cultural observation, maintained because of tradition. However, there are also the believers, who prepare themselves, and truly feel His coming.

For according to the teachings of our faith, He did not come only 2,000 years ago—He comes every year. When we got to church at midnight to hear the beautiful hymns that refer to Jesus Christ, we hear “*Today, He is born...*”

Of course, as creatures that live in materialistically focused communities and societies, we too try to cultivate that spirit. We buy things—whether out of love or obligation—and consume things, because we forget our spiritual selves.

And this is where I would like us to focus our attention. This time and this year, we should not forget *ourselves* as we prepare to celebrate Christmas.

You see, God is also waiting for a present. He is not waiting for the gift that we buy our loved ones—He waits for our heart; our mind; our well-being. He waits for the purification of sinful thoughts, and for our confession, so that with a clean heart we can really experience His coming.

When we truly experience His coming, we shall feel the Spirit of love and understanding; the Spirit of servitude and faith. When we feel these things, than shall we be uplifted.

I wish you all a Blessed Nativity, full of peace and joy.

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Metropolitan of Atlanta

