

The message of our salvation (Petros Panayiotopoulos)

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Today is a bright and joyful day for the human race. The Archangel Gabriel brings the message of our salvation to the Virgin Mary. God comes to be born in the flesh, to dwell in a human body, to expunge the curse, to bridge the gap that separated God from people. The Lord of the Heavens asks the permission of a person He created, to plight Himself to the lowliness of her nature. Today is revealed the ineffable magnitude of God's mercy towards us rebel humans. He Who is boundless comes into nature and becomes the son of a human being, in the "form of a servant" and "takes on created flesh".

In spring, the season of the renewal of nature, the Son and Word of God comes to adopt human nature and dwell within it. The new Adam comes to remake and remould people in a second creation, to offer us the Paradise lost by the first Adam after the first creation. Humble Nazareth becomes the new Eden for humankind. Our merciful Father demonstrates that He hasn't forgotten the work of His hands. This is why, today, we have every reason to rejoice and be glad for the great gift that has been offered to us.



After the disastrous exchange between Eve and the primordial enemy, there came the saving encounter of another women with God's appointed angel. Her initial distress at the outlandish message was followed by her submission to the will of God and her voluntary agreement to play a part in God's plan to redeem us from the bonds of corruption and sin. After havoring between fear and joy, the Most Holy

Maiden didn't reject the benefaction, and the mystery of our salvation began to be put in place. From that moment, God began to work with the free consent of a human being and so the Most Pure Mary wedded her virginity with child-bearing.

He Who shares eternal being and the heavenly throne with His Father, comes today to make people sharers in divine nature. What a great and strange event. Without emerging from His divinity, He Who existed before people did, today comes together with a person and in a short while will emerge from a person. And the mystery of our salvation is just as strange: divine mercy overlooks the penance for disobedience, and overshadows human nature.

Without losing His own glory, He makes the Virgin the palace of divine glory. The blessed Virgin today becomes the means for the restoration of the human race to the office for which it was originally destined. The bitter taste of the fruit of disobedience today recedes, because it is superseded by the sweetness of "water changed into life". The bread of life is given to us in abundance by Him Who now is Himself a human person and similar to "the siblings, so that He may be merciful". Today, the will of the flesh is healed and the inexhaustible riches of salvation are given back to us.

Together with Gabriel, the whole of creation today praises the ever-virgin Mother of God and raises a salutation of thanksgiving for the fact that she became the earthly Mother of the Lord of creation. We thank her for correcting Eve's error and for interceding with God so that we could be reconciled to Him. She who was dedicated to God as the living temple not made by hands, has torn down the barrier of sin and has given us inexpressible joy. This is why she deserves our eternal honour and gratitude.