

**BISHOP OF THE METROPOLITANATE  
OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND  
THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
S Y D N E Y**



**ЕПИСКОП МИТРОПОЛИЈЕ  
АУСТРАЛИЈСКО - НОВОЗЕЛАНДСКЕ  
СРПСКЕ ПРАВОСЛАВНЕ ЦРКВЕ  
С И Д Н Е Ј**

E No. 03a/22  
05 January 2022

**To all the clergy, venerable monastics and faithful people of the God-saved Metropolitanate of  
Australia and New Zealand**

My dear spiritual children in the Godchild Christ,

Gathered in our holy temples throughout the God-saved Metropolitanate of St. Sava, welcoming the great, the all-fateful and all-saving birth of the Sun of Justice - the Godchild Christ, we greet each other and the peoples around us with greetings of peace, hope and consolation of God;

**The Peace of God - Christ is Born!**

Yes! Brothers and sisters, Salvation is born unto us! The light of the Godchild has illuminated us, dispelling the spiritual darkness that has gripped the world and the souls of men! The flame of Bethlehem's grace-filled warmth, warms our hearts – and, sorrow and hopelessness give way to joy, faith and hope! Isolation, division, suspicion, and fear give way to love and unity, trust and courage!

If God is with us, as the hymnography of the Church heralds this Christmas Eve, who will be against us?! Who can frighten or shake a Christian!

Christmas is the most tangible confirmation that we were created for eternity and immortality. Heaven descended to exalt the earth, God became man to make us, the fallen and strayed, gods by grace, to restore us to the dignity and calling that belongs to us. It is a great mystery that even the angels desire to peer into, a mystery of God's compassionate love for mankind and the world.

What joy in heaven today, the angels through song assure the shepherds (Luke 2:14) that Heaven has bowed towards the earth, that the Infinite and Eternal God has made himself poor to enrich us, reduced himself to exalt us, limited himself to make us boundless by His grace!

No one on earth, no government, no world organization is able to give humanity such comfort, such joy, freedom and victory that God has given to humanity on Christmas. That joy and consolation, that freedom and victory is gained, experienced and lived in the Church. It is not abstract, theoretical, but experiential and immanent. That is why the great Prophet David sings with divine inspiration in his psalms, "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 33: 8).

He who possesses the joy of Christ, His truth, is the freest, regardless of all the restrictions, all the chains, pressures and blackmails that are cast upon him.

With all this in mind, I invite all of you, my dear spiritual children, to rise this Christmas with our minds and hearts above earthly worries and the temptations we are faced with, to direct our gaze towards Bethlehem, and see there our guiding star - the Godchild Christ who will illumine our ways and lead us to the only true path leading to Life.

3 A NANCE AVENUE • PO BOX 457 • CABRAMATTA NSW 2166 • AUSTRALIA

• (T) +61 (0)2 9601 1215 •

[secretary@soc.org.au](mailto:secretary@soc.org.au) • [www.soc.org.au](http://www.soc.org.au)

Let us not seek salvation and saviours outside of Christ. No vain human efforts alone will bring us comfort and salvation. The experience of the Church teaches us that every crisis has a spiritual foundation, a spiritual cause. That is why the way out of this crisis will primarily depend on the spiritual state and atmosphere that reigns within us and the world around us.

Having this spiritual law before us, we should make a special effort this Christmas to reconcile with God and our neighbours: to repent of our sins, to change our lives and return to Christ. In this way our Christmas celebration will be one of peace, spiritual joy and happiness. This is the most crucial step for us in exiting not only this, but every crisis.

This Christmas, we appeal to all our dear parents to protect their children who are entrusted to them from everything that can harm their souls and bodies.

We should acquaint our children with Christ (Matthew 19:14) in order to give them a profound meaning and direction in their lives. No career, no material wealth, no status will be of any value to them if they are without Christ in their lives.

Let us also remember this Christmas, our Serbian brethren in Kosovo and Metohija who live under duress and the constant threat of persecution and extermination.

In addition to the material assistance we need to provide them with, our greatest gift to crucified Kosovo will be in preserving the 'Kosovo Covenant' in our hearts and in the hearts of our children on the fifth continent. That covenant is the lifeblood of the Serbian people and their Church, wherever our people abide.

Let us be united and in mutual love for one another. Let us not allow ourselves to be divided by those of this world. We pray to God for the good and salvation of our neighbours. For those who are in trouble and sickness, as well as those who sacrifice themselves for the wellbeing of others. As Orthodox Christians, we must not allow the spirit of division that has gripped the world to enter the Body of the Church. Fear and panic weaken faith and take away hope and give rise to doubt. That is why we need to wash the eyes of our heart with the faith and hope given in Christmas to gain a holistic vision and proper comprehension of the world around us.

May the overcast spiritual sky turn bright within us, may the light of the Godchild Christ shine in our hearts so that we may persevere in the way of God; so that we may bring solace and hope to the world. The fallen world seeks salvation in man, and Orthodoxy - in the God-Man!

May the Godchild Christ transform us all with His love and goodness, giving us perseverance in the feat of carrying our cross in this world, in the context that His wisdom has placed us in.

I greet you all on the joyous Feast of Christ's Nativity!

**The Peace of God**

**Christ is Born! Indeed He is Born!**

  


**+SILUAN**

Bishop of Australia and New Zealand  
The Serbian Orthodox Church

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