

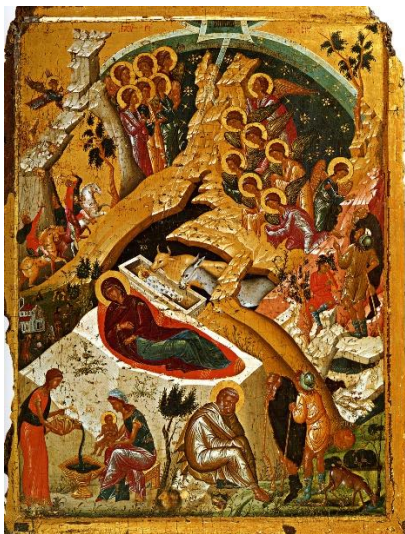
Archpastoral Christmas Greeting for Christmas 2024/25

+SILUAN

**By the grace of God, Archbishop of Sydney and Wellington, and
Metropolitan of Australia and New Zealand**

**To all the clergy, monastics, and the faithful people of the God-saved
Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Australia and New Zealand**

Peace of God – Christ is born!



Dearly beloved spiritual children in the God-Child Christ,

Gathered in our holy churches this Christmas Eve, joyfully praying and thanking God for His ineffable love and mercy, we, together with the angels and the shepherds of Bethlehem proclaim: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2,14).

Indeed, brothers and sisters, if it were not for the Evangelion, for the Good News of Christmas, what could man truly rejoice in and hope for in this world? If the face of the God-Child had not shone upon it, if we did not behold the "fairest of the sons of men" (Ps. 45:2), if the Son had not been given to us (Isa. 9:6), if Emmanuel (Isa. 7:14) had not shone forth to the human race as the true guiding star and sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2), as the true and eternal guide, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6), what would human life be and this world look like?

For this reason, brothers and sisters, let us bow down this evening before the God-Child and glorify Him, let us renew our life and relationship in, and with Him, as Orthodox Christians! May our hearts tonight be the Bethlehem cave, the manger that will receive the Lord Christ... Let us not carelessly open our hearts to various visitors, philosophies,

gurus, and unknown forces, for due to negligence, we may unnoticeably allow the destructive force of the spiritual wolf into the sacred space of our hearts!

Let us strive to live ascetically-liturgically, in love and forgiveness, in the harmony and unity of the way of Saint Sava. Let us know that anyone who invokes Saint Sava while undermining his work, his 'covenant', grieves Saint Sava and our holy ancestors.

Observing the wars and turmoil around us, we are called to pray more fervently to the Lord, the only True Prince of Peace, to enlighten human hearts so that they may begin to see with Christ's peace.

This Christmas, we pray and have in our thoughts our brothers and sisters in crucified Serbian Kosovo and Metohija, and likewise, our brothers and sisters who are in trouble and are suffering around the world. May the Lord Christ, this evening, comfort and heal every wounded heart, every tormented and sorrowful soul with His gracious Bethlehem light!

Rejoicing together with all of you on the feast of the Holy Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we wholeheartedly wish you all abundant strength, joy, and every grace-filled blessing in the God-Child Christ!

Peace of God – Christ is born! Truly, He is born!

+SILUAN

Metropolitan of Australia and New Zealand