

A HOMILY FROM ST GREGORY NAZIANZUS FOR THE FEAST OF  
THE NATIVITY

*Paraphrased by Nathan Nettleton, 25 December 2000*

Nic Denny-Dimitriou - 25th December 2004

Christ is Born, let us glorify Him!  
Christ has come from heaven,  
let us go out to meet Him.  
Christ is on earth,  
and yet still is exalted above the earth.

Let the heavens rejoice,  
and let the earth be glad;  
our joy is in the one who belongs to heaven  
and who now belongs to the earth.  
Christ has come in human flesh.

We rejoice with trembling and with joy;  
with trembling because of our sins,  
with joy because of our hope.  
How could we not worship Him who  
existed from the very beginning?  
How could we not glorify Him who  
will go on existing at the very end?  
To the people who sat in fearful darkness,  
the light has dawned.  
The God who spoke the light into being  
sends forth his Word again  
and there is light.  
The old things are passed away,  
behold all things are made new.

The Spirit of the law triumphs  
over the letter.  
The shadows flee away,  
the Truth displaces them.

The Christ who had existed without Mother  
now comes to us as one without Father.  
The laws of nature are disrupted  
for Christ has spoken,  
and no one can stand in his way.

O clap your hands as one all you people,  
because to us a Child is born -  
a Son is given unto us.

The Government is upon His shoulder  
for with his heavy Cross he raises it up.  
His Name is called The Angel of the Great Counsel of the Father.

Let John cry,  
“Prepare ye the way of the Lord.”  
Let us too declare the power of this Day.  
He who had no need of a body  
is now Incarnate;  
the Son of God becomes the Son of Mary,  
and yet remains Jesus the Christ,  
the same yesterday, and to-day,  
and for ever.

Though the religious be offended,  
though the wise respond with derision  
though the opinionated talk till their tongues ache  
surely they shall all believe,  
when they see Him ascending to be everywhere present;  
and if still not,  
then when they see Him coming in glory as Saviour and Judge.

God was made manifest to humanity by birth.  
On the one hand he was the eternal Being,  
the uncreated one  
who existed before anything else was;  
and on the other hand for our sakes also  
he allowed himself to become created,  
so that He Who gives us our being  
might also give us our Well-being,  
or rather might restore us  
by His Incarnation,  
when in our waywardness  
we had fallen from wellbeing.

This is the Festival which we are celebrating today -  
the Coming of God to us,  
that we might return to God;  
the coming of God to us  
that we might put off the old human nature  
and put on the New.

This is the Festival which we are celebrating today -  
the Coming of God to us,

so that as we died in Adam,  
now we might live in Christ,  
being born with Christ  
and crucified with Him  
and buried with Him  
and rising with Him.

For we undergo this beautiful conversion,  
and as the bliss is followed by pain,  
so out of the pain comes the new bliss.  
For where sin abounded,  
there Grace even more abounds;  
and if a taste of apple has condemned us,  
how much more  
does the Passion of Christ justify us?

Therefore let us keep the Feast,  
not in an orgy of consumption  
as is the way of the world,  
but in a godly manner  
with joy surpassing the world;  
not as a festival of our own  
but a festival belonging to Him  
who has given himself to us.

Let the heavens rejoice,  
and let the earth be glad;  
With the animals  
who gave up their manger,  
let us make room for him;  
With the Magi from the east,  
let us bring gifts to his feet;  
With Shepherds, glorify Him;  
With Angels, join in chorus;  
with Archangels, sing hymns.

Let this Festival be common  
to the powers in heaven  
and to the powers upon earth.  
For I am persuaded that the Heavenly Hosts join in our exultation  
and celebrate a high Festival with us to-day,  
because they love the people of the earth,  
and they love God  
and they love the reconciliation  
of heaven and earth.

Only one thing

connected with the Birth of Christ  
calls forth from us hatred and disgust -  
the murder of the infants by Herod.  
But venerate this memory too,  
the martyrdom of those  
who were the same age as Christ,  
those who were slain for Christ  
even before he was slain for them.  
Come then, let us keep the Feast,  
Let us look at and be looked at by the Great God,  
who in Trinity of Love is worshipped and glorified,  
and who we recognize now  
set before us as clearly as human flesh will allow,  
in Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom be the glory for ever.  
Amen.