

APOSTOLIC AND PATRIARCHAL THRONE OF ALEXANDRIA  
GRACE AND MERCY AND PEACE  
FROM OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST  
BORN IN BETHLEHEM

*"Christ is born, glorify Him. Christ from heaven. Let us go to meet Him"*

My dear and blessed brothers and sisters,

With these beautiful words, the hymnographer presents the great Mystery of the Lord's Birth. God the great and incomprehensible becomes a visible and palpable man. Christ descends from heaven and is born on earth.

From ancient times until today, heaven has been a place of spiritual quests, as well as a field of scientific investigations. People of all ages, from the time of the mythical Icarus to the modern era of telecommunications where human messages are reflected in the celestial firmament and returned to earth, have looked up to find answers to their agonizing existential questions.

Within the realm of the church, the hymnographer's reference to heaven is always a fixed theological certainty. Heaven, of which Holy Scripture presents so many references, is the place where the will of God is a given fact, to which the angels, the heavenly powers and the saints are attuned. The biblical phrases "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill to all men" or "your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (the Lord's Prayer) reveal the final purpose of the salvific work of the Incarnate God, the "heavenization" of the world, "so that mankind may be freed from error and evil and come to know truth and virtue, so that there is no difference between earth and harmonious heaven", as mentioned by Saint John Chrysostom (Sermon 19, 5). The Kingdom of God is always our destiny, and the Nativity of the Lord is the dawning of the "last day", the participation of human nature in the divine glory, about which the heavenly Angels sang on that peaceful night in the humble cave of Bethlehem.

Our Holy Church, and especially the ancient Church of Alexandria which is active pastorally and missionarily in the vastness of Africa, the continent of the future, experiences the above theological truths in a doxological manner, similar to that of the Angels on the night of the