



Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ our Savior,

Once more a light shines in the night of this world and in the darkness of the hearts of those who do not see it. It is the Word made flesh in the fragility of the Child-God of Bethlehem, and it espouses our humanity until it becomes One with this feebleness till the end of time. We are now no longer alone – our every breath and heartbeat lives in Him. All of our thoughts, emotions, and our entire life dwell in Him. Emmanuel, God with us, and yet we are so seldom with Him.

Despite that, we must proclaim to the whole world that Christ was born, and that this is not the anniversary of a past event. Rather it is the beginning of a new life, radiant and mad with a hope that sees prophecies being fulfilled.

This year Covid-19 struck us in our monasteries and in the community of Our Lady of the Sign. I consider it a grace to have lived the difficult final part of Advent in great physical, moral, and spiritual poverty.

As I wrote to you above, Christ is with us, and therefore He is suffering this virus along with us. Yet He does not stop embracing us with

His Love. The Holy Spirit keeps calling us to mutual aid and fraternal charity. Some have provided services to help the sick, while others have drawn down abundant graces through prayer. Thank you, Lord, for the beautiful Church that you have given us. She is your glorious Body wonderfully vivified by brotherly love.

This year is a more beautiful Feast of the Nativity than ever. We have aching bodies and hearts, but we are filled with unspeakable joy and profound peace. We are happy to be one with all of you on this wonderful day, my beloved. In truth, we are united in the Manger with the beautiful and luminous Child-God, with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, and with the animals that embody all of creation's sweet presence in the angels' eternal praise.

*Today the Virgin gives birth to the Eternal One, and the earth offers a cave to the Inaccessible One. The angels and the shepherds praise Him, and the Wise Men move forward with the star. For You were born as a little child for us, Eternal God!*

May you All have a Holy and a Merry Christmas!

Marc – Primate of the Celtic Orthodox Church