



**COPTIC ORTHODOX  
PATRIARCHATE**



**DIOCESE OF MISSISSAUGA,  
Vancouver and Western Canada**



## Pastoral Letter for the Glorious Feast of Nativity

January 7, 2021

Dear Beloved Fathers and Beloved Congregation in Christ across the Diocese of Mississauga, Vancouver and Western Canada,

I wish you all a Happy New Year and joyful Feast of Nativity. I miss all of you.

During this pandemic, many of us experienced frustration. We need to be supported by the hope that Christmas grants us. We can learn many lessons about hope from the Feast of Nativity. So don't give up! Keep going!

*The first lesson* is to keep following the Star of Christ. The Wise Men were guided by the Star to Bethlehem. The story of the Magi inspires us with hope that if we follow the star, we will surely arrive at Bethlehem, like the Wise Men, where we will meet with Jesus. In your life, that star may be the Bible, the word of God, or your father of confession or your patron saint. When we follow them they lead us to Jesus.

*The second lesson* is that saying "Yes" to the Lord grants us hope. St Mary said the greatest words during this time, "Let it be to me" as a response to Archangel Gabriel when he explained to her that she would bear the Son of God. This response changed her life completely from being an ordinary girl to being the Mother of God. "Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her" (Luke 1:38). St. Mary's response generates hope for all believers—that by saying "Yes" to God, our lives will completely change. He is asking us to repent and follow Him. If we do that, our lives and future will change. Fr. Pishoy Kamel was once asked by a man, "what is the difference between a saint and a sinner?" Fr. Pishoy replied, "both are sinners, but the saint is the one who repents". Also our responses and our words to others around us have a strong impact. Your words to your husband or wife or children may change their lives for better or worse.

*The third lesson* is that Christmas give us hope by reminding us of the active presence of the angels in our lives who send us the message that we are not alone. We are surrounded by many angels. "The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them" (Psalm 34:7).

*The fourth lesson* is that in the darkness of time, Christmas grants us hope. The angels of the Lord appeared and told the shepherds about the birth of our Lord Jesus saying, "I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10,11). God did not enter our world at high noon. He entered our lives in darkness, showing us the way to light, guiding us towards love, and demonstrating how to overcome shadows and darkness. Christmas teaches us that even when things seem so dark, we can trust the everlasting Christ to enlighten our lives.

Never lose hope in God!

May God bless you through the prayers of H.H. Pope Tawadros II

  
Bishop Mina  
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