

PATRIARCHAL MESSAGE FOR THE CHRISTMAS 2014

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THEODOROS II

**BY THE GRACE OF GOD POPE AND PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA, ALL EGYPT AND ALL AFRICA TO THE ENTIRE FULLNESS OF THE APOSTOLIC AND PATRIARCHAL THRONE OF ALEXANDRIA
GRACE AND MERCY AND PEACE BY OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, BORN IN BETHLEHEM**

"The Most High God appeared on earth as a lowly man, desiring to draw up to heaven those who cry out to Him: Alleluia"

My dear brothers and sisters,

The pre-eternal Son of God became the Son of man so that man could become the son of God. As in the first creation God took soil from the still virgin earth and gave man flesh, so with the birth by Virgin Mary, God formed a new creation. The Son of God was united with human nature so as to create a new state of life.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ by God's extreme condescension opened a new page in human history. Jesus Christ became an intercessor between God and man. He adopted the created man and brought him into communion with the uncreated God. He secured for him the opportunity to break the shackles of the forces which crushed his existence and to become a shareholder of God. The incarnation became the announcement of God's will to open up the way of salvation for the people.

Christ, who willingly took on the pain of human nature to heal it, came into painful contact with the human passion for power from the first steps of His earthly life. He, who according to the decree of the angel to Joseph, would save His people, was driven away. He, who came close to the people for their benefit, was persecuted. The Merciful Son of God was exiled from His homeland. He became a refugee in the then distant Egypt and suffered for many years. This was due to Herod's insatiable lust for power.

Two thousand years later, man's unquenchable thirst for power threatens his fellow human beings and God's creation. Power as an end in itself nourishes the unequal distribution of wealth between individuals and nations. It is based on repression and on the violent imposition of the will of the powerful. It detests what is different and it is hostile to counterargument. It alienates man from his values and thoughtlessly exhausts nature. It glorifies the ego and devalues the we.

The thirst for supremacy over the opponent is indifferent to ordinary people and has driven the number of refugees above those of World War II levels. Disregarding the welfare of the weak people has turned the Mediterranean into the sea of the desperate people. Serving only the national interest has left the countries of West Africa struggling defenselessly against the Ebola virus. The desire to impose unreasonable ideological principles fuels terrorism and jihadism threatens international legitimacy.

My dear brothers and sisters,

Any attempt to deal with these challenges of our times will prove futile if it does not start with the following acknowledgment: it is vital that the love of power gives way to the power of love. The power of love as it was incarnated by the Son of God two thousand years ago, when in ultimate humility He became man to offer us heaven. The power of love, which, despite being threatened to be extinguished at any moment, is continuously reborn. Persecuted and forsaken, it knows where to find refuge. Its kingdom is the hearts of the people who never cease uttering "I have

trusted in God; I do not fear what man may do to me".

In this world that is becoming increasingly narrow, change will only come about if we first look for Jesus Christ within us. The God-man, as an indissoluble bond, unites us all!

Many Years!

†THEODOROS II

Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa

In the Great City of Alexandria

Feast of the Nativity 2014