



THE MONASTERY OF SAINT TIKHON OF ZADONSK

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Nativity Fast 2011

Beloved of the Lord,

As we begin preparing for the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, we begin a journey to renew our focus on spiritual things while relinquishing our all-too-tight grasp on the material world and its concerns which so often choke and take the place of true spiritual life. Certainly, our lives are busy and the world moves at an increasingly rapid pace. However, it is always within our ability to say “no” to the world, to the distractions, and to the allurements and sins which cloud our ability to see the Lord and, concurrently, it is our right and privilege to say “yes” to spiritual life, choosing what is eternal in this temporal world. According to the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, the Nativity of Christ “is not a festival of creation but a festival of re-creation,” of a renewal, which sanctifies the whole world. It is this grace given to us in the feast that can potentially kindle a renewal of spiritual life in us. We all must seek during this holy season to refocus our lives on the one thing needful: our salvation, which is only found in our relationship with the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ.

While it is still today and we have the time, let us remember the Magi who traveled for months following the star from a distant land, bringing the most precious gifts they could to Christ, the new born babe. In imitation of them, let us begin our journey to the Nativity by following the path of prayer, fasting, confession and increased Church attendance, seeking to give Him the treasure of our heart and life. Let us follow the stars of the Apostles, Prophets and Saints who light the way to the greatest event which still marks the calendars of most of the modern world. And let us give thanks to God for so great a gift which has been given to us this Season, for “unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace and of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.”

With love in the newborn Christ,

Igumen Sergius
Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery