

(Unofficial Translation) Christmas Greeting from His Beatitude Lubomyr

Major Archbishop of Kyiv and Halych of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church

Beloved in Christ!

It has so happened that on the threshold of Christmas we have been witnesses to the International Conference in Copenhagen on Climate Change. Delegates from all over the globe took part in these proceedings in order to determine together ways in which to avoid the catastrophe which today threatens the human race. In Copenhagen scientists re-iterated that this threat has been caused by the selfish and careless stance of people towards their environment. For decades, if not for centuries, humans have been behaving like creators and actual owners of the world around them, extravagantly exploiting and destroying nature. Hence today, after all this so-called “Stewardship”, humanity has finally understood that we have put ourselves in great danger. Many of us now realise that we are not the real owners or lords of our planet and that in fact nature is gift of God to humankind, a gift which needs to be respected and used within reason. This is indeed what the Scriptures teach us: “Yahweh God took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and to take care of it. Gn. 2:15

Dear brothers and sisters, over 2000 years ago our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ was born in the village of Bethlehem of Palestine. This is indeed an extraordinary event, for God Himself, the Creator and King of the universe took flesh and human form and became one of us. His birth was a sign that humanity and everything connected to it is so good that God’s own Son, though Whom everything came to being, and without Whom nothing could exist (Jn 1:3), by his coming confirmed that all that God had created is good, even very good. (see Gn. 1, 4, 1Jh 3) By His baptism He sanctified the waters and the whole world, and by His death He conquered death – that reality that we are most afraid of. Through His life, His teaching and His ministry He demonstrated Who is the true Lord and Master of the universe. For ‘everything there is comes from Him, and is caused by Him and exists for Him. To Him be glory forever. Amen” Rom 11:36

Dearly beloved in Christ, as we stand beside the manger of Christ at this festive time, let us ask for the gift of gratitude to God, since everything that we have, our life, our environment, our salvation, is God’s gift to us.

On the occasion of this great feast it is my wish that we would truly discern who we are in the eyes of God. We are His beloved children who have been abundantly blessed and who on our part ought to always give thanks to our Creator and Heavenly Father and to the newborn Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. We need to desire a respect for everything that our God bestows upon us.

At this holy time, let us strive to understand that the realization itself of the truth that all that comes from God is good, is already another great gift of our Most Holy, Almighty God.

As I end my Christmas greeting, my sincere wish is that you may all have a true awareness of God's love for us and may your hearts always overflow with gratitude for this great gift!

Signed: Lubomyr

Given in Kyiv at the Patriarchal Sobor of the Resurrection of Christ on 11 December 2009