



EPARCHY
OF ST. MARON
CANADA

***Nineteenth letter of His Excellency
Bishop Paul-Marwan Tabet
To the Maronite Community of Canada
Christmas 2022***

*To all Monsignors, Priests and Brothers, Nuns and Sisters, Deacons,
To all people consecrated and committed to the life of the Church and the Society,
To all Parents, Children, Young Men and Young Women,
To all Parish Communities,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

“They shall call his name “Emmanuel”, which means: God is with us” (Matthew 1:23)

On the occasion of Christmas and New Year, I send you my best wishes. I pray with you that the light and joy of the Nativity be showered upon our families and our society.

People waiting for a long time, and prophets whispering throughout the ages about the coming of the Messiah. They gave Him names and titles: “*Son of God*”, “*the Christ*”, “*the Savior*”, “*Son of David*”. However, the Prophet Isaiah gave him the name “*Emmanuel*”, which is a Syriac Aramaic word meaning “*God is with us*”.

In turn, John the Evangelist bears witness, saying: “*In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory from the Father to the only begotten Son, full of grace and truth*” (John 1:1-14).

Moreso, the letter to the Hebrews states: “*At many moments in the past and by many means, God spoke to our ancestors through prophets. But in these last days, has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things and through whom He made the ages*” (Hebrews 1:1-2), and today we hear “*To you a Savior is born*”.

So, are we still waiting for Him? Are we waiting for the “child in the manger”, or the Nazarene “carpenter’s son”, who eats with sinners and tax collectors? Or “*the meek and humble of heart*”? Or “*the shepherd who knows everyone by name*”?

Through His nativity, Jesus showed us that the history of revelation is an encounter between God and humankind, that the Father is with us, and that the Spirit will unite us with Him at the end of time. It is the **mystery of the Lord’s presence amongst us...**, which means that humankind was always with God, since the beginning of time until eternity.

Our Lord lived in our history, embodied in the flesh and blood of a human being. He experienced what we did, namely joy, hardship and death, in order to be with us the “Emmanuel”, born of Mary, present in the Eucharist and sits at the right hand of the Father. He dwells in every person at any time or place...

If we realize through our faith that God is with us; then where is the proof? The proof is to be with Him, feel His presence in us and in others and entrust Him with the details of our life.

On this Christmas, I invite you to listen attentively to Jesus, the “Incarnate Word”. Let him do in your souls his salvific action, and “*take Him as the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit*” (Ephesians 6:17) in this dark world. Rejoice, be happy, and thank Him for His graces. Do not be afraid, because He is alive and present: “*Emmanuel, our God is with us*”... and He will remain forever.

**The Savior is born... Halleluiah!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!**