December 25, 2017
Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord
Is 52:7-10
Heb 1:1-6
Jn 1:1-18

By Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

The universal Christmas greeting in the Eastern Christian Churches, Catholic and Orthodox, is not “Merry Christmas,” or “Happy Holidays.” It is “Christ is born! Let us glorify Him!” The first sentence is an explicit proclamation of faith by word: the Messiah of Israel, the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Savior of the world has entered human history with the birth of Jesus. The second sentence is a commitment to wholeheartedly proclaim Him by word and deed.

The word translated into English as “glorify” can also be translated “magnify,” as in the MAGNIFICAT: “Magnificat anima mea Dominum,” “My soul doth magnify (glorify) the Lord.” A magnifying glass makes visible what otherwise is too small to perceive. In a human condition rent by relentless evil, savaged by ceaseless suffering and doomed to death seeing God as the “Father of all,” seeing “God is love (agape),” is impossible without a magnifying glass. Jesus is the magnifying glass of God: “Jesus Christ is the glory (magnification) of God the Father,” “The one who sees me sees the Father,” “the Father and I are one.” To be “baptized into Christ,” to “put on Christ,” is to agree to become another Christic magnifying glass, via loving as Jesus loves, of “God, who is love.”

In our freedom, we can choose to magnify by our words and deeds Christ and the God He is the incarnation of and the revealer of. We can thereby make Him and His gift of saving Divine Nonviolent Merciful Love toward all in all circumstances evermore visible to a humanity whose vision of “God, who is love” and consequently of His Will—distorted as it is by fear, concupiscence and the shadow of extinction—is all but imperceptible. So on this anniversary of the birth of Jesus, instead of giving a Lamborghini, a Starbucks’ gift certificate, or a Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare video game for a Christmas present, perhaps, a better present this year would be to give the gift of ourselves as a magnifying glass to others, that is, as a magnifying presence by our words and deeds of Christ-God’s everlasting love of them.

St. Isaac of Syria (b. 640) tells us in his Nativity Homily how, starting this very Christmas, we can begin being this magnifying glass that enlarges the knowledge of the Presence of “God, who is love” within us and within the world, while simultaneously enhancing our own knowledge and that of others that everlasting mercy, infinite forgiveness, an eternally secure existence, perpetual peace and holiness without end is our ultimate destiny in eternity and vocation while on earth.

NATIVITY HOMILY OF ST. ISAAC OF SYRIA
“This Christmas night bestowed peace on the whole world;
Let no one threaten;
This is the night of the Most Gentle One -
Let no one be cruel;
This is the night of the Humble One -
Let no one be proud.
Now is the day of joy –
Let us not seek revenge;
Now is the day of Good Will -
Let us not be mean.
In this Day of Peace -
Let us not be conquered by anger.
Today the Bountiful impoverished Himself for our sake;
So, rich one, invite the poor to your table.

Today we receive a Gift for which we did not ask;
So let us give alms to those who implore and beg us.
This present Day are cast open the heavenly doors to our prayers;
Let us open our door to those who need our forgiveness.
Today the Divine Being took upon Himself the seal of our humanity,
In order for humanity to be decorated by the Seal of Divinity,”
Wouldn’t a Christlike presence to others be the best of all possible Christmas presents
to give? It would be a gift, which would keep on giving from here to eternity—because
Christlike love, love that magnifies, glorifies, “God, who is love,” although sometimes
costly, “does not come to an end” (1 Cor 13).
Christ is born! Let us glorify Him!

Emmanuel Charles McCarthy is a Byzantine Catholic Melkite priest, whose life's vocation is to
call the Churches of Christianity to again proclaim, teaching and live the Way of Nonviolent Love
of friends and enemies as revealed in the words and deeds of the Nonviolent Jesus in the
Gospels. He was co-founder of Pax Christi USA.