

Nativity Message from HH Pope Shenouda III

My beloved children in the lands of immigration, clergy and laity.

My greetings and love to you, wishing you all goodness from the Lord. Hoping that you are all growing in grace and in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I congratulate you on the Feast of the Nativity and for the beginning of a New Year, may it be new for you in all things and especially for your spirituality.

Amongst the words that I remember on the occasion of the Feast of the Nativity, is what was said about Him during His Incarnation, that He “went about doing good.” (Acts 10:38)

It is a lesson to us in our lives, to be like Him, going about doing good.

Goodness is not only leaving sin, for this is only the negative aspect. The most important aspect however, is the positive side. That is, doing good with everyone, in order that everyone who meets us on the path of life will gain goodness, by any means. The Bible said about this positive goodness, that, “to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” (James 4:17)

Hence, sin is not merely committing evil or impurity, but not doing good also is a sin. This is not the case in the New Testament only, but also in the Old Testament, for the Bible says “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it,' when you have it with you.” (Proverbs 3:27-28)

Goodness is not only in materialistic giving, but in spiritual giving also: in the ministry, in a good word, in a word of advice, in a word of benefit, in a word of sympathy, in a word of kindness and compliment by which you gain friends. Doing good is leading people to goodness, and in the soft answer, which “turns away wrath.” (Proverbs 15:1)

You can do good by comforting wearisome souls, as the Lord said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) You can do good by having a happy and smiling appearance. By this, people will be pleased when they see you.

You do good if you are able to share in mission work, or by conveying the word of God to those who do not know it, or by conveying the faith to unbelievers.

Ministry in the Church is doing good, there do not let Satan plant tares in it by the way of division and love of the self.

My beloved children, place this principle in front of you in this New Year: that every day you do not do good, do not count this day as day of your lives.

God created you in His image and God is the Beneficent One. So you also be likewise, in the image of Your Heavenly Father, beneficent as He is. Let this not only be when people ask from you to do good

to them, but rather do not wait for them to ask. May you possess the sensitivity by which you can comprehend what will make people happy and try to make them joyful. In this manner, you will go about doing good.

May the Lord be with you, and may He make us always hear all good about you.

Pope Shenouda III

Pope of Alexandria & Patriarch of the See of St. Mark

Feast of Nativity, 2012