



## ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ ΜΑΡΩΝΙΤΩΝ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ

### *Message of His Excellency the Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus Youssef Soueif For Christmas 2015*

**“Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them”**

(Matthew 5, 7)

Dear Fathers,  
Consecrated People,  
Brothers and Sisters in Christ

With great joy we celebrate the Nativity of the Lord, the incarnated Word, expression of God's infinite mercy toward us.

God the Father could not see us suffer from our sins, nor live in death, so in the fullness of time He sent His Word incarnated by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, to accomplish the greatest and tangible act of love which is our salvation, the salvation of all humanity.

This is the meaning of the Jubilee of Mercy proclaimed this year by Pope Francis, inviting us to live it with joy and strong faith.

God became man, a child was born in a manger in order to reflect the reality of the divinity which is humility, mercy and solidarity. God is love, eternal love. The divine child makes us recall thousands of children who suffer today from injustice, violence and wars. How many families, holding strongly in the arms their children, flee and emigrate nowadays from our region, from Syria and Iraq, how many minorities are persecuted and how many children die in the Mediterranean sea in front of our eyes. In this Holy Year of Mercy let us unite our strengths with all people of goodwill and in front of terrorism without frontiers, let us spread love and forgiveness without frontiers.

Christmas comes to remind us that we must care without discrimination for the children of the whole world, particularly those who are the victims of today's Herod society. Guided by God's Mercy, we must also care and respect creation “our common house” as per the Holy Father and in the dimension of “Diaconia”, we must care and serve every person living in the peripheries of our societies and bow before the poor like did Jesus Christ by healing the wounded brothers and sisters. Every time we serve the poor, the needy and the suffering, we are opening our hearts to God's mercy. Every human person is worthy of respect and worthy of being the centre of our attention and the expression of God's love.

In front of the physical, mental and spiritual sufferings that every one of us has in his/her life, we invoke the divine mercy that heals, renews the soul and the spirit and makes us hopeful again. “Behold, do not be afraid I bring you goods news of great joy which will be for all people for there is born today in the city of David, a Saviour who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2: 9-10)

Pope Francis has issued recently an encyclical under the title “Laudato Si” where he invites the human conscience and the international community to rethink deeply on the future of humanity which is in danger every time man does not respect the environment and the creation, motivated by selfishness. There should urgently be a “global ecological conversion”, a sincere love, an integral commitment of the human person in preserving and developing well the gift of creation.

Dear Brethren,

Our beloved Cyprus is a gift from God. We have inherited an island of natural, human and spiritual beauty. In front of the momentum of our recent history, let us enter hand to hand as Cypriots from all the communities that form the one Cyprus identity, in the dynamism of mercy, in order to enjoy the day of the reunification of our country especially for the future of the new generations that deserve a better tomorrow.

The Magi came to worship the Son of God and offered gifts to the new born baby, the new King of the world. He is surely waiting from every one of us offerings that please his heart. He wants our hearts, our will, our availability to love, to serve, to forgive and to give. Let us open our hearts to the Lord and allow him to be born inside our lives so that we live the internal and external joy that reflects the birth of hope.

The Infant of Bethlehem has a name. His name is “Emmanuel”, He is living here and now among us, he is our Creator and our Saviour and with the Virgin Mary, the Angels and Saints let us rejoice! Alleluia!

With Saint Ephrem, our father in faith we pray:

Blessed be that Child, Who gladdened Bethlehem today!

Blessed be the Babe Who made manhood young again today!

Blessed be the Fruit, Who lowered Himself to our famished state!

Blessed be the Good One, Who suddenly enriched our necessitousness and supplied our needs!

Blessed He whose tender mercies made Him condescend to visit our infirmities!

*Merry Christmas*

Nicosia 25<sup>th</sup> December 2015

† Youssef Soueif

Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus