

DIOCESE OF NEW ENGLAND – ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA



The Right Reverend BENEDICT

Bishop of Hartford and New England

Archpriest John Kreta

Chancellor

23 December 2024

To the Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of New England,
Greetings in the Incarnate Lord!

“God became human,” writes St Athanasius the Great, “that we might become divine” (*On the Incarnation* 54.3).

We come once again to our yearly observance of the birth of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ. We celebrate liturgically, with attention to the Scriptures that foretold his coming among us, the Gospels that recount his birth, the apostolic letters that show us its implications.

“I behold a strange, most glorious mystery—a paradox,” as we sing in the Canon of the Nativity: “Heaven—the cave; the cherubic throne—the Virgin; the manger—the place where Christ, the God whom nothing can contain, is laid. Him do we magnify in song!”

And we meditate on the greatest paradox: God—man; man—divine. For Christ’s incarnation both calls us to that and makes it possible. We are to become like him by reflecting the love he showed us in his birth, teaching, death, and resurrection—we are to reflect this love in very practical ways, as we hear him tell us when he speaks of the Great Judgment (Matthew 25.31 and following).

Let us rejoice, therefore, in his birth and ask his blessing as we strive to carry out his teachings in our lives.

I greet you with the joy and blessings of the Nativity!

With love in Christ,

+ *Benedict*

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