

Exhortation for the Solemn Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord

A year has passed in our lives of unprecedented alienation. We have been separated from our family; we have been separated from our friends; we have been, perhaps most importantly, separated from our Church and from the brethren. Such is the curse which infests this passing world. *Wars, and rumors of war, plague and famine*; these are what define our world; our world of division, our life of divorce from one another.

And yet, while we were still sinners, a child was born, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. While we were yet still far apart, from one another, and from heaven, yet the Son of Heaven determined to come near us; behold, the Word incarnate draws near, our light and our salvation, our hope and our final fulfillment; our Lord, whom *none could see and live*, is now made manifest in a lowly infant, born of a simple Virgin, the mother Mary, for He would share our life, in every aspect of it, that He may be our brother, even as God is our Father. So even from the beginning of His earthly life, He was born of a mother, ever blessed is He.

The Lord is coming, and indeed this evening has come, to share in all our passions, our iniquity, our misery, our sorrow, that He might draw us out of this suffering as one draws poison from a wound.

Therefore, that we might be made whole, and restored from the mortal sickness of our original sin in the incarnation of the Son of God, let us this night keep vigil, both in hearing and in singing, listening to the most holy Word of our Redeemer, and casting our songs of longing, and our hymns of praise before the manger which shall soon bare within it the majesty of our infant God, the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be all glory, honor, and worship, unto the end of

the age. Amen.

Let us therefore pray for the Church and all the world, for whom our God in grace has come, that we may be healed.