

THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

A refrain often heard during one of the services at the Nativity of Christ is: “GOD IS WITH US!” It is the meaning of the word ‘EMMANUEL.’ This proclamation provides us with a capsule definition of the Nativity.

This feastday means that God Himself has come to earth, that God has taken upon Himself human flesh, that He has become Man, not ceasing to be God. This is what we might call an unbelievable concept, but it is precisely what we believe is true. This is the glory, wonder and joy of Our Lord’s Birth.

**There is so much that goes on during this holyday season that takes our gaze off Christ, that makes our ears less attuned to His Word, and even our hearts less yearning for things holy. But the cry – GOD IS WITH US! – brings the day back into focus. It points to the true significance of the festival:
The Birth of the Christchild.**

The origin of the exclamation ‘EMMANUEL’ is a unique story. It was first used by the great Prophet Isaiah some 750 years before the birth of Jesus. The Book of Isaiah has been called “the Gospel of the Old Testament,” for it speaks so eloquently about the forthcoming Saviour. In 7:14 we have this clear prophecy: “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel”.

**That is exactly what happened on the day of Nativity. When Christ was born, God became “flesh, and dwelt among us,” as St. John the Apostle says. St Paul picks up the theme: “Christ Jesus who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of Men . . .” Yes, indeed, we proclaim:
GOD IS WITH US!**