

2013 Proclaimed Year of Global Solidarity

“.....From the Ecumenical Patriarchate, then, we have been closely following the “signs of the times,” which everywhere echo the “sounds” of “war and turmoil” – with “nation rising against nation, dominion against dominion, great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues, alongside dreadful phenomena and heavenly portents.” (Luke 21.10-12) In many ways, we are experiencing what St. Basil wrote about “the two types of love: one is feeling sorrow and concern upon seeing one’s beloved harmed; the other is rejoicing and striving to benefit one’s beloved. Anyone who demonstrates neither of these categories clearly does not love one’s brother or sister. (Basil the Great, *Shorter Rules*, PG31.1200A) This is why, from this sacred See and Center of Orthodoxy, we proclaim the impending new year as the ***Year of Global Solidarity***.

It is our hope that in this way we may be able to sensitize sufficient hearts among humankind regarding the immense and extensive problem of poverty and the need to assume the necessary measures to comfort the hungry and misfortunate.

As your spiritual father and church leader, we ask for the support of all persons and governments of good will in order that we may realize the Lord’s ***peace on earth*** – the peace announced by the angels and granted by the infant Jesus. If we truly desire this peace, which transcends all understanding, we are obliged to pursue it palpably instead of being indifferent to the spiritual and material vulnerability of our brothers and sisters, for whom Christ was born.

Love and peace are the essential features of the Lord’s disciples and of every Christian. So let us encourage one another during this Year of Global Solidarity to make every conscious effort – as individuals and nations – for the reduction of the inhumane consequences created by the vast inequalities as well as the recognition by all people of the rights of the weakest among us in order that everyone may enjoy the essential goods necessary for human life. Thus, we shall indeed witness – at least to the degree that it is humanly possible – the realization of peace on earth.

Together with all of material and spiritual creation, we venerate the nativity of the Son and Word of God from the Virgin Mary, bowing down before the newborn Jesus – our illumination and salvation, our advocate in life – and wondering like the Psalmist “Whom shall we fear? Of whom shall we be afraid?” (Ps. 26.1) as Christians, since “to us is born today a savior” (Luke 2.11), “the Lord of hosts, the king of glory.” (Ps. 23.10)

We hope earnestly and pray fervently that the dawning 2013 will be for everyone a year of global solidarity, freedom, reconciliation, good will, peace and joy. May the pre-eternal Word of the Father, who was born in a manger, who united angels and human beings into one order, establishing peace on earth, grant to all people patience, hope and strength, while blessing the world with the divine gifts of His love. Amen.

At the Phanar, Christmas 2012

+ Bartholomew of Constantinople

