

**Nativity Homily 2004**  
**Selections from the Hymns of St. Ephrem the Syrian on the**  
**Nativity of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ in the Flesh**

**Priest:** In the days of the king who enrolled people  
For the poll tax, our Savior descended  
And enrolled people in the Book of Life.  
He enrolled them, and they enrolled Him. On high He enrolled us;  
On earth they enrolled Him. Glory to His Name!

**Faithful: Glory to His Name!**

**Priest:** Blessed be the Child Who today delights Bethlehem.  
Blessed be the Newborn Who today made humanity young again.  
Blessed be the Fruit Who bowed Himself down for our hunger.  
Blessed be the Gracious One Who suddenly enriched all our poverty and  
filled our need.  
Blessed be He Whose mercy inclined Him to heal our sickness.

**Faithful: Blessed be the Holy Child of Bethlehem!**

**Priest:** Glory to the Heavenly One Who mingled his salt with our mind, His  
milk with our souls. His body became bread to revive our mortality.  
Whoever eats the bread of the Heavenly One will become heavenly without  
doubt.  
Great is the treasure house of Thy birthday. [Hymn 4]

**Faithful: Great is the treasure house of Thy birthday O Christ!**

**Priest:** Glorious is the Wise One Who allied and joined Divinity with  
humanity, one from the height and the other from the depth. He mingled the  
natures like pigments and an image came into being: the God-man.[Hymn 8]

**Faithful: Glory to the God-Man!**

**Priest:** This is the night of reconciliation; let us be neither wrathful nor  
gloomy on it.

**Faithful: Neither wrathful nor gloomy!**

**Priest:** On this all-peaceful night let us be neither menacing nor boisterous.

**Faithful: Neither menacing nor boisterous!**

**Priest:** This is the night of the Sweet One; let us be on it neither bitter nor harsh.

**Faithful: Neither bitter nor harsh!**

**Priest:** On this night of the Humble One, let us be neither proud nor haughty.

**Faithful: Neither proud nor haughty!**

**Priest:** On this day of forgiveness let us not avenge offenses.

**Faithful: Let us not avenge offenses!**

**Priest:** On this day of rejoicings let us not share sorrows.

**Faithful: Let us not share sorrows!**

**Priest:** On this sweet day let us not be vehement.

**Faithful: Let us not be vehement!**

**Priest:** On this calm day let us not be quick-tempered.

**Faithful: Let us not be quick-tempered!**

**Priest:** On this day on which God came into the presence of sinners, let not the just man exalt himself in his mind over the sinner.

**Faithful: Let us not exalt ourselves!**

**Priest:** On this day on which the Lord of all came among servants, let the lords also bow down to their servants lovingly.

**Faithful: Let us bow down to others!**

**Priest:** On this day when the Rich One was made poor for our sake, let the rich man also make the poor man a sharer at his table.

**Faithful: Let us share with the poor!**

**Priest:** On this day a gift came out to us without our asking for it; let us then give alms to those who cry out and beg from us.

**Faithful: Let us give alms!**

**Priest:** This is the day when the high gate opened to us for our prayers; let us also open the gates to the seekers who have strayed but sought forgiveness.

This Lord of natures today was transformed contrary to His nature; it is not too difficult for us also to overthrow our evil will.

Today the Deity imprinted itself on humanity, so that humanity might also be cut into the seal of Deity. [Hymn 1]

His swaddling clothes gave a robe of glory to human beings. [Hymn 5]

**Priest: Christ is born!**  
**Faithful: Glorify Him!**