

What wondrous gifts our God has given us!

Feast of the Nativity Of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

December 25

Glory to God in the highest! And on earth, peace, goodwill toward men!

+ All generations are represented in the wise men who travel to bring their gifts to God: the young (beardless), the grown (black-bearded), and the elderly (white-bearded).



+ The Virgin Mother is seen reclining—she has just endured real childbirth.

+ The cave foreshadows the tomb wherein Christ will open eternal life to all.

+ His swaddling prefigures His graveclothes.

+ Even the animals offer Him gifts of awe and the simple warmth of their breath.

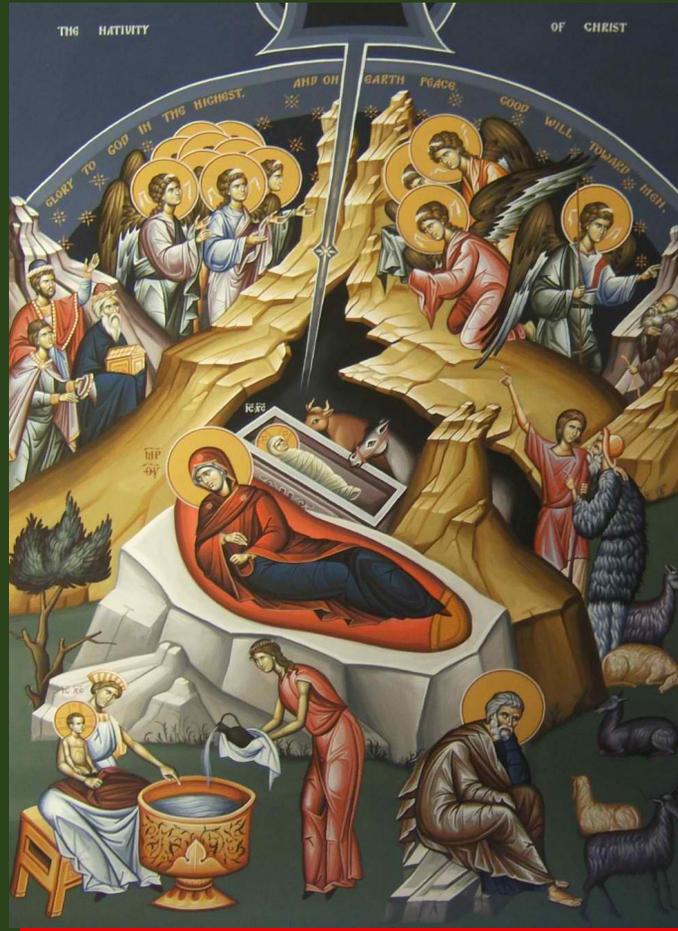


+ Midwives are shown bathing the Child, providing care that all newborns need, to emphasize His humanity.



+ Though not mentioned in the Gospels, according to the tradition of the time, two midwives would attend a childbirth.

+ St. Joseph the Betrothed would likely have arranged for this.



+ Countless angels are shown doing the many works that we are all called to do as God's creation.

+ These works include worshipping God, offering their service, singing hymns of praise, and announcing the Good News of His birth.



+ Humble shepherds respond to the angel's words and to the star showing the way.

+ They come through the barren wilderness...a reminder of the inhospitable world as it has been since man was expelled from Paradise.



+ St. Joseph the Betrothed is seen at a distance from the central image of the Panagia and her Child, reinforcing that he is not the father of the Newborn.

+ He faces out into the darkness, troubled with doubts about Christ's Virgin Birth.

+ In some icons, he is shown listening to an old, bent man representing the Evil One, who makes these troubling suggestions.



What can we give back?

