



THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

December 25

THE HYMN

Nativity Vespers

What shall we offer you, O Christ, because you have appeared on earth as a man for our sakes? For each of the creatures made by you offers you its thanks: the Angels, their hymn; the heavens, the Star; the Shepherds, their wonder; the Magi, their gifts; the earth, the Cave; the desert, the Manger; and we, a Virgin Mother. God before the ages, have mercy on us.

THE SERMON

What Do We, Our Christ, Offer You?

With joy and happiness, the entire world prepares to celebrate the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. During this period, intense preparations keep our days full and long. Bright lights and festive decorations flood the landscape. We are all so busy preparing our gifts for the big celebration.

All of this is great and serves to complement our basic inner need to take a break from life's daily struggles and to sit at the festive table with our loved ones. However, all of this does not automatically help us prepare spiritually for the remarkable and extraordinary event that the salvation of humankind represents.

Let us pause for a moment and consider this: we are all exchanging gifts these days. But to Christ, Who freely bestows on us our salvation, what gift do we offer Him?



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One of the most beautiful hymns during the festive period of the Nativity theologically provides us with a most complete and telling answer. The hymn asks: What gift can we offer You, our Christ and God? You who came to earth as a man to unite us eternally to You? All Your Creation, participating in the event of the Nativity of the King of Kings, offers You something. Your Angels praise You. The sky offers the star, the Magi rush to offer You gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The shepherds, in amazement and admiration, worship You. The earth offers You the cave and the desert the manger. What do we, our Christ, offer You?

We offer the Virgin Mother for You to take human flesh. We offer You the Virgin Mother to be born. You come, our Saviour, our Father, our Creator, to take human nature upon Yourself and to unite us with You. We renounced You in the person of the old Adam and lost the union, the communion with You. But You did not abandon us. You came into the world and took on human flesh. You became the new Adam. You took upon Yourself the sin of Adam, the denial, the arrogance of humankind, and You enabled us to share and partake of Your divinity.

Even our Virgin Mary, this most precious offering of humanity for our salvation, You gave it to us. You embrace us with Your infinite love. You, Who are the eternal God, have mercy on us, Your children. Help us celebrate Your Nativity in peace, love, and joy.

Merry Christmas!