

“And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” - Matthew 2:11





# A Gift of Love

Nativity Feast | 2024





# The Gift

- “For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Lk. 2:11)
- "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Lk. 2:14)
- “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (Jn. 3:16)



# The Reason

*“He has been manifested in a human body for this reason only, out of the love and goodness of His Father, for the salvation of us men.”*

*(St. Athanasius of Alexandria, On the Incarnation)*





# 1. Reconcile

- “Now all things are of God, **who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ**, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in **Christ reconciling the world to Himself**, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 5:18-19)
- “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and **has broken down the middle wall of separation**, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to **create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace**, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. **For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.**” (Eph. 2:14-18)

## 2. Restore

- Our nature needed healing
  - “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Mk. 2:17)
- Restore the Lost
  - “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.” (Jn. 10:16)





### 3. Reveal

- “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.” (Matt. 11:27)
- “...having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself...” (Eph. 1:9)
- “...*was incarnate and became man, and taught us the way of salvation.*” (Liturgy of St. Basil)



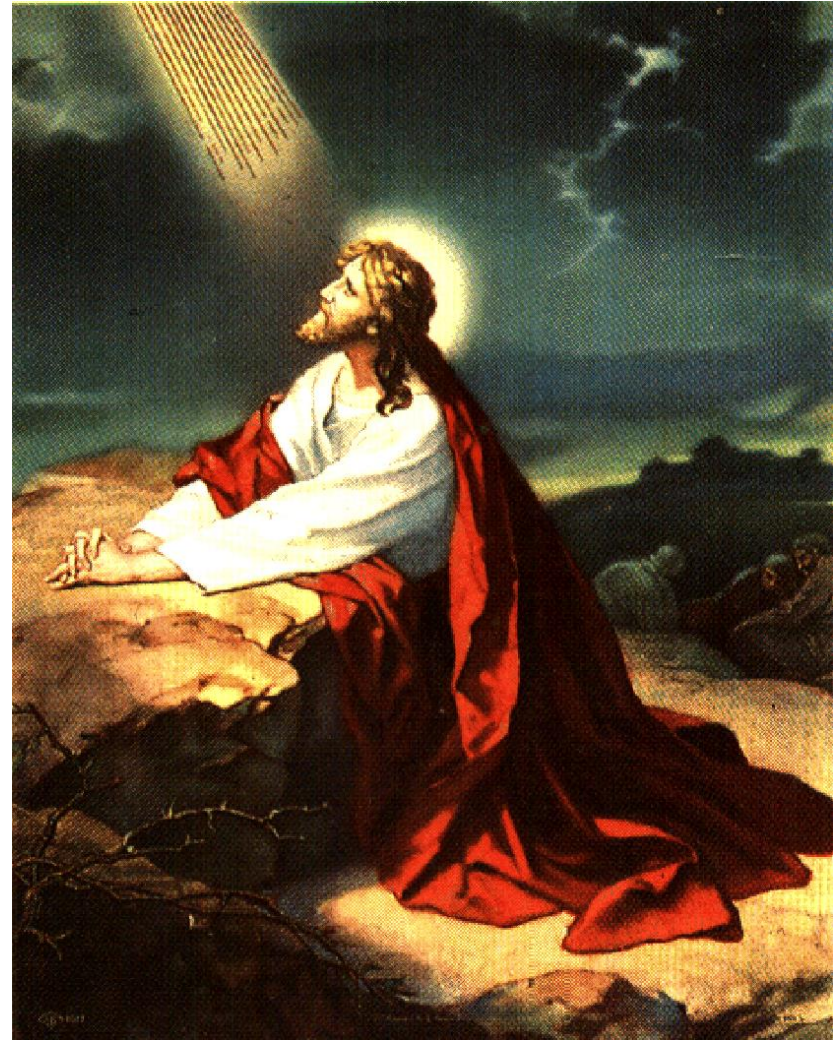
## 4. Release

- “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love...” (Col. 1:13)
- The Lord Christ came to grant us freedom through the forgiveness of sins.
- “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” (Gal. 5:1)



## 5. Receive

- The Lord came to receive us to Himself - salvation.
- “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (Jn. 3:16)
- “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us...” (Jn. 17:20-21)





# My Response

- “If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.” (1 Jn. 4:20-21)
- Parable of the Unforgiving Servant
- “Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?” (Matt. 18:33)





# Summary

## A Gift of Love

1. Reconcile
2. Restore
3. Reveal
4. Release
5. Receive

How will I respond?

