

St. George Orthodox Church

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V. Rev. Father Joseph M. Abud, Pastor

Protodeacon Michael Bassett

Web Site: saintgeorgeflint.org

December 24, 2017

HOLY FATHERS OF CHRIST (SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OR THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST)

صلاة السحر لأحد الذي قبل عيد الميلاد (والمعروف بأحد النسبة)

FOREFEAST OF OUR LORD'S NATIVITY

Tone 4 7th Matins Gospel {John 20:1-10}

Altar Servers: **EVERYONE** {Shane Gantos, captain}

Confessions

8:30-9:30am

Matins p.44

8:50am

Divine Liturgy p.91

10:00am

Memorial Service

Trisagion p.183

Welcome to St. George! Thank you for attending today's Divine Liturgy. Please register your visit by completing the guest book located in the narthex. We would appreciate getting to meet you, so feel free to join us during Coffee Fellowship in our Banquet Center!

Every Sunday we remember the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The word "*Liturgy*" means *work of the people* that means everyone participates through singing, praying, hearing the teaching, and opening our hearts to allow God's grace to enter. We believe Holy Communion to be a sign that in Christ we have all things in common, share an identical faith, and are united fully to the Orthodox Church. Anyone interested in learning more about our faith are encouraged to speak with one of our clergy. Holy Communion can be given to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting (no food or drink from midnight the night before), the Sacrament of Confession (7 years and older) within the last 2 months, being at peace with others, and attending the Divine Liturgy regularly. Please know everyone is invited to venerate the Holy Cross and receive Holy Bread at the end of Liturgy.

Third Antiphon (during the Little Entrance)

Troparion of the Resurrection—Tone 4

Having learned the joyful message of the resurrection from the angel, the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation, and proudly broke the news to the disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled. Christ God is risen granting the world great mercy.

Hymns after the Entrance with the Gospel

Troparion of the Resurrection—Tone 4 (*same as above*)

إن تلميذات الرب تعلمن! من الملاك بشرى القيامة البهجة، و طرحن القضية الجدية و خاطبن الرسل مفتخراتٍ و قاتلاتٍ قد سبي الموت و قام المسيح الإله مانحاً العالم الرحمة العظمى.

Troparion of the Sunday before Christmas—Tone 2

Great are the accomplishments of faith; for the three holy youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though at waters of rest. And the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. Wherefore, by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

عظيمة هي تقويماث الإيمان. لأن الثلاثة الفتية القديسين. قد ابتهجوا في ينبوع اللهب كأنهم على ماء الراحة. والنبى دانيال ظهر راعياً للسباع كأنها غنم. فبتوسلاتهم أيها المسيح الإله ارحمنا.

Troparion for the Forefeast of the Nativity—Tone 4

As the fruit of David's seed, Mary was registered of old with the Elder Joseph in the little town of Bethlehem, when she conceived with a seedless and pure conception. Behold, the time was come that she should bear her Child, but no place was found within the inn for them; yet the cave proved a delightful palace for the pure Lady and Queen of all. For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforesaid.

في ذلك الوقت، كُتِبَتْ مَرْيَمُ مَعَ يَوْسُفَ الشَّيْخِ فِي بَيْتِ لَحْمٍ، بِمَا أَنَّهُمَا مِنْ زَرْعِ دَاوُدَ، وَكَانَتْ حَامِلَةً الْحَمْلَ الَّذِي بَغِيْرَ زَرْعٍ. فَلَمَّا حَانَ وَقْتُ الْوِلَادَةِ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لهُمَا مَكَانٌ فِي الْقَرْيَةِ، ظَهَرَتِ الْمَغَارَةُ لِلْمَلِكَةِ كَبَلَاطٍ مُطْرَبٍ. الْمَسِيْحُ يَوْلَدُ مِنْهُضاً الصُّورَةَ الَّتِي سَقَطَتْ مِنْذُ الْقَدِيمِ.

Troparion for St. George—Tone 4

As deliverer of captives and defender of the poor, healer of the infirm, champion of kings: Victorious Great Martyr George, intercede with Christ our God, for our souls' salvation.

بِمَا أَنَّكَ لِلْمَأْسُورِينَ مُحَرَّرٌ وَمَعْتَقٌ، وَلِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ عَاضِدٌ وَنَاصِرٌ، وَلِلْمَرْضَى طَبِيبٌ وَشَافٍ، وَعَنْ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَكْفَاحٌ وَمَحَارِبٌ، أَيُّهَا الْعَظِيمُ فِي الشَّهَدَاءِ جَاوِرِجِيُوسَ الْبَلْبَسِ الظَّفَرِ، تَشْفَعُ إِلَى الْمَسِيْحِ الْإِلَهِ فِي خِلَاصِ نَفُوسِنَا.

Kontakion in Preparation for the Nativity (Birth) of Christ—Tone 3

The Virgin cometh today to the cave to give birth, ineffably to bring forth the Word eternal. Therefore, rejoice O earth at the message; with the angels and shepherds give glory to Him who shall appear by His own will as a young child, He who is from eternity God.

الْيَوْمَ الْعِذْرَاءُ تَأْتِي إِلَى الْمَغَارَةِ لِتَلِدَ الْكَلِمَةَ الَّتِي قَبْلَ الدُّهُورِ وَوَلَادَةٌ لَا تُفَسَّرُ وَلَا يُنْطَقُ بِهَا فَافْرَجِي أَيْتَهَا الْمَسْكُونَةَ إِذَا سَمِعْتِ وَمَجْدِي مَعَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرَّعَاةِ الَّتِي سَيُظَهِّرُنَا بِمَشِيئَتِهِ طِفْلاً جَدِيداً وَهُوَ إِلَهُ قَبْلَ الدُّهُورِ.

Epistle Reading: *Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40* {Sunday before the Nativity}

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 1:1-25* {Sunday before the Nativity}

Holy Bread Offerings

- The Shahin Family for the health of the **Shahin, Hawkins, Moore, and Rhinehart Families** and a safe, blessed Nativity for all people.
- George and Jeanette Nassif for the health of their family and in loving memory of **Ace, Sylvia** (8 year), **Jack** (27 year), **George, Minera, Joe, Mamie, Angie, Martha, Mary, and Jenny**.
- Khaled and Sally Abuaita for the health of their family especially children **Watan, Ayham, and Majd** and in loving memory of **Rahma Albedd** (Sally's grandmother) and Aunt **Mary** (Sally's aunt).
- We also pray for the servants of God who have fallen asleep in the Lord: **John Takach** (+November 25th, father-in-law of Camela Takach), **Hanna Abuaita** (+December 6th), and **Iyad Bannura** (+December 6th, cousin of Hiam).
- Prayers are offered for our parishioners who are ill, recovering, or in need, especially His servants: **Metropolitan Paul** and **Archbishop John** who are in captivity, **Sahar Abdallah, Androlla Abu Aita, Asma Abuaita** (sister of Janett Abuaita), **Shafiqah Abuaitah, Jane Abueita, Abla Abufarha, Maher Alatrash, Ceasar and Naila Banna, Emil Bathish, Vera Farah, Mariam Ghanim** (Manal's mother), **Phyllis Good, Carol Haddad, Roland Haddad, Salwa Haddad, Daisy Isaac, Daniel Isaac, John Isaac, Nawal Iseid, Sally Joseph, Nakhleh, Nicola, and Saba Khoury, Danny Mortensen, George and Renee Nassif, Aida Raffoul, Elaine Shaheen, Mary Salim, Michael Silpoch, William Sophiea Jr., Ola Alqazaha** and newborn **Christina** (December 12th).
- We also pray for those who are with child: **Ghaida Awad**.

Communion Hymn (for the Lord's Day)

(Refrain) Praise the Lord from the heavens. Praise Him in the highest.

(Verse) Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts! (Refrain)

(Verse) Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all you shining stars! (Refrain)

(Verse) Praise Him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! (Refrain)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Reception of Holy Communion

Please remember only ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS who have PREPARED themselves may partake of Holy Communion. *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."* (1 Corinthians 11:28-29).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP is hosted by the *Ric Shahin and Family*.

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOSTS Available dates: January 21st and 28th ~ sign-up poster and hosting information is in the Lounge and includes: bringing whatever you wish to serve and cleaning up afterwards. St. George provides coffee, cups, cream, and sugar at a charge to the host of \$25. For more information, please see Manal Abuaita.

6TH ANNUAL PAN-ORTHODOX WINTER DINNER (SEE FLIER IN LOUNGE!) Thursday, January 18th All proceeds support the Dormition Monastery in Rives Junction, MI. We are hosted by Assumption Church and begin with **Vespers** sung by the Nuns at 5:30pm; **Social Hour** with *Displays and Gift Shop from the Monastery*, along with *visiting with the nuns* is at 6:15pm; **Dinner and Presentations** begin at 7pm with the **Benediction** at 8:30pm. The cost is \$35 for Adults and \$25 for Students. For more information and to make your reservations, (deadline is January 14th!), please see Protodeacon Michael.

NORTH END SOUP KITCHEN Your help is needed this coming Tuesday, December 26th from 9am-12:30pm! If you have questions or want to sign-up, please contact Jim or Evelyn Delbridge (jimdelbridge@charter.net or 810-630-2353). Since our children are out of school, this is a great opportunity for the whole family to follow our Lord's command of *"feeding the hungry"*!

2018 OFFERING ENVELOPES AND CHURCH CALENDARS Please pick yours up (and other family members and friends) so we do not have to mail them! If your name isn't listed, call the church office. The calendars (please take 1 per family) are a gift from our Ladies Auxiliary, THANK YOU, LADIES! Our children received their envelopes in Church School. Parents, please make sure your child gets their *Offering Envelopes*.

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY AT ST. GEORGE! (see flier on Narthex Table) A wonderful evening is planned! For more information or to make paid reservations, please contact Shouky Zerka (810-287-1601) or Elie Damouni (810-730-8959) TODAY! Adults: \$60; 12 years and younger: \$30. Paid reservations MUST BE PURCHASED by December 25th!

CREDIT AND DEBIT CARDS We are now able to take Credit or Debit Card purchases and donations. If you would like to make a purchase or a donation, please come to the office during normal Office Hours (see below) or call to do it by phone.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS Our average weekly offerings need to be \$5,630 to meet our 2018 Budget. On December 17th, our offerings were \$7,396! 😊 If you haven't already, please fill out your 2018 Offering Form and support God's work at St. George!

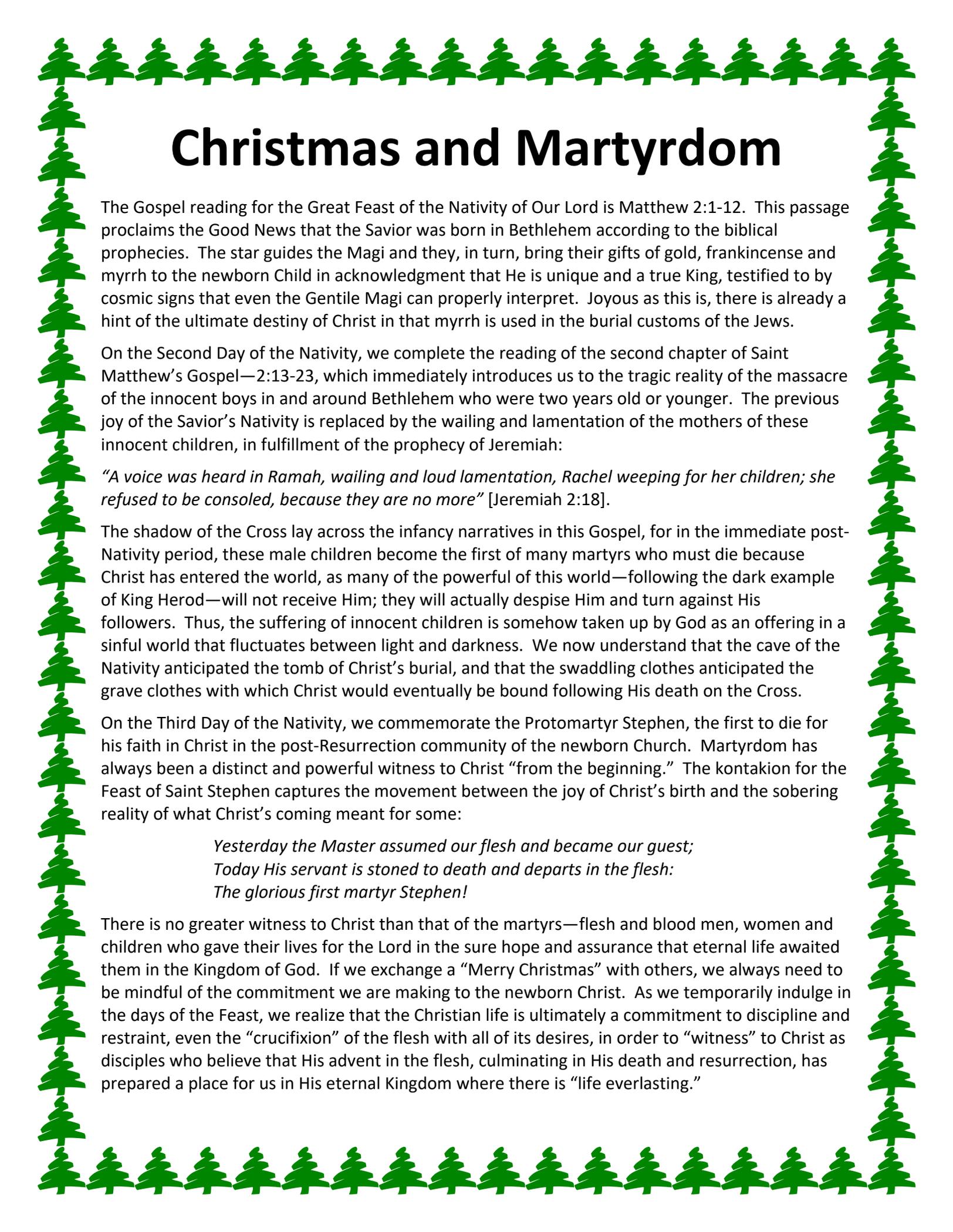
COMING EVENTS	
This Week	On Wednesday, November 15 th , we began the traditional forty-day CHRISTMAS FAST in preparation for the feast of the Nativity of Christ on December 25 th . The Fast is divided into two periods. The 2 nd period is from December 20 th through 24 th , when the traditional fasting discipline (<i>no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine, oil and their by-products</i>) is observed except on Saturday and Sunday when <i>wine and oil</i> are permitted. There is no fasting from Christmas Day December 25 th until January 4 th .
Tuesday	North End Soup Kitchen 9am-12:30pm
Wednesday	Women's Christmas Dinner Party 5:30pm
Friday	Altar Society Christmas Dinner Party (<i>see Theresa Farah for more information</i>)
Saturday	Great Vespers and Confessions 5pm

DECEMBER 24TH ~ HOLY FATHERS OF JESUS CHRIST

The Sunday before the Nativity of the Lord (December 18-24) is known as the Sunday of the Holy Fathers. On this day, the Church commemorates all those who were well pleasing to God from all ages, from Saint Abraham to Saint Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos (those who are mentioned in the genealogy of Matthew 1). The holy prophets and prophetesses are also remembered today, especially the Prophet Daniel and the three holy youths (December 17th).

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- If you know of a parishioner who has given birth, fallen ill, or admitted to the hospital, please call the church office or let Father Joe know.
- **SPECIAL OFFICE HOURS FOR THIS WEEK** Our secretary, Kelly Dotson, works Wednesday and Friday (10am-4pm); Thursday (9am-12pm). Kelly can be reached at the church office 810-732-0720 or kellysecstgeorge@gmail.com.
- If you would like to host Coffee Fellowship in memory of a loved one, the occasion of a birthday, a wedding anniversary, or in thanksgiving to God, sign up on the poster in the Lounge or speak with Manal Abuaita.
- If you would like to offer Holy Bread (*Holy Oblation*) in memory of a loved one, for the health or safety of a loved one, or to commemorate a special occasion, you may phone the church office (810-732-0720) by 12 Noon of the Wednesday before. If in memory of a loved one, please state whether you would like to have a **Memorial Service** near the end of Divine Liturgy. It is always appropriate to have this on the 3rd, 9th, and 40th day after one's falling asleep and also on the 6th month, and on the yearly anniversary.



Christmas and Martyrdom

The Gospel reading for the Great Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord is Matthew 2:1-12. This passage proclaims the Good News that the Savior was born in Bethlehem according to the biblical prophecies. The star guides the Magi and they, in turn, bring their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the newborn Child in acknowledgment that He is unique and a true King, testified to by cosmic signs that even the Gentile Magi can properly interpret. Joyous as this is, there is already a hint of the ultimate destiny of Christ in that myrrh is used in the burial customs of the Jews.

On the Second Day of the Nativity, we complete the reading of the second chapter of Saint Matthew's Gospel—2:13-23, which immediately introduces us to the tragic reality of the massacre of the innocent boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or younger. The previous joy of the Savior's Nativity is replaced by the wailing and lamentation of the mothers of these innocent children, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah:

"A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more" [Jeremiah 2:18].

The shadow of the Cross lay across the infancy narratives in this Gospel, for in the immediate post-Nativity period, these male children become the first of many martyrs who must die because Christ has entered the world, as many of the powerful of this world—following the dark example of King Herod—will not receive Him; they will actually despise Him and turn against His followers. Thus, the suffering of innocent children is somehow taken up by God as an offering in a sinful world that fluctuates between light and darkness. We now understand that the cave of the Nativity anticipated the tomb of Christ's burial, and that the swaddling clothes anticipated the grave clothes with which Christ would eventually be bound following His death on the Cross.

On the Third Day of the Nativity, we commemorate the Protomartyr Stephen, the first to die for his faith in Christ in the post-Resurrection community of the newborn Church. Martyrdom has always been a distinct and powerful witness to Christ "from the beginning." The kontakion for the Feast of Saint Stephen captures the movement between the joy of Christ's birth and the sobering reality of what Christ's coming meant for some:

*Yesterday the Master assumed our flesh and became our guest;
Today His servant is stoned to death and departs in the flesh:
The glorious first martyr Stephen!*

There is no greater witness to Christ than that of the martyrs—flesh and blood men, women and children who gave their lives for the Lord in the sure hope and assurance that eternal life awaited them in the Kingdom of God. If we exchange a "Merry Christmas" with others, we always need to be mindful of the commitment we are making to the newborn Christ. As we temporarily indulge in the days of the Feast, we realize that the Christian life is ultimately a commitment to discipline and restraint, even the "crucifixion" of the flesh with all of its desires, in order to "witness" to Christ as disciples who believe that His advent in the flesh, culminating in His death and resurrection, has prepared a place for us in His eternal Kingdom where there is "life everlasting."