



COPTIC ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE

**DIOCESE OF OHIO,
MICHIGAN, AND INDIANA**



I am joyful at the Nativity of Christ. Merry Christmas.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

People all over the world, with the beginning of the year, exchange greetings saying:

“A glorious and happy Nativity to our Lord Jesus Christ,” or

“I am joyful at the Nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ,” or Merry Christmas.

Is this expression and this joy from the heart, or from the tongue only?

As we learned in the Kiahk hymn: “My heart and my tongue glorify the Trinity.”

And for the joy to be truly from the heart, we need follow the steps of this verse from the Psalms of David the Prophet. Psalm 119: 44–48

1. So shall I keep Your law continually, forever and ever.
2. And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts.
3. I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings, And will not be ashamed.
4. And I will delight myself in Your commandments, Which I love.
5. My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, which I love.
6. And I will meditate on Your statutes.



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1. “I keep”

First: how can joy be from the heart except by knowing the Savior, and keeping His commandments? Knowing that His name is called Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). And we keep and store this law and word in a pure and faithful heart, so that it may be preserved from the sins and evils of the world. (Psalm 119:11)

2. “And I will walk at liberty”

That is, I can enjoy the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Romans 8:20), because I know the boundaries of the commandment and I seek it in my prayers at all times.

3. “And I will speak of Your testimonies”

(1 Peter 3:15) And this heart is not ashamed to speak before anyone. Rather, it is always ready to answer everyone who asks for the reason for the hope and the joy that is within it, with meekness and reverence, because of the greatness of the commandment that fills the heart.

4. “And I will delight”

And this heartfelt joy, through knowing the Savior, His law, and His plan for our salvation, is transformed into a heavenly, lasting delight—not an earthly, temporary one.



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5. “And I will lift up my hands”

That is, I reach joy through a life of thanksgiving and continual prayer.

6. “And I will meditate on Your statutes”

And the attempt to reach depth and a life of contemplation, which the Virgin Mary lived and the choir of saints.

The bells of Christmas are the greatest awakening that the heart of a person seeking salvation and eternity needs. So let us prepare with seriousness and true joy to receive the Savior, the Child of the manger, and let the meaning of the greeting be real and from the heart.

I am joyful at the Nativity of Christ. Merry Christmas.

We ask you, our good Savior, the lover of mankind, on this Feast and the new year, to preserve the world in peace, through Your safety and wisdom, O King of Peace, and keep in peace All the Churches, and the shepherd of the Shepherds, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, the Metropolitans, the Bishops, the Priests, the Deacons, and all the servants, and Your children.

My beloved children, fathers the priests, servants and the congregation of the Diocese of Ohio, Michigan and Indiana, USA, congratulations on the glorious Feast



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of Nativity. May you be fruitful in every good work, and may He return the days to you with goodness, joy, and peace.

You have my love and my prayers, and all of you are always in my heart.

By the grace of God,

Saraphim,

Servant of the Diocese of Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana