

January 02, 2022
The Epiphany of the Lord
Is 60:1-6
Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13
Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6
Mt 2:1-12

JOINING THE MAGI!

After the Mass on Epiphany Sunday, a woman asked her parish priest, this question, **“Do you know why God gave the star to the wise men?”** When the priest professed his ignorance, she told him: **“God knows men are too proud to ask directions. If there had been three wise women instead of three wise men, they would have asked for directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, and given some practical gifts!”**

Joking aside, in the gospel proclaimed we have heard today the magi (wise men) were looking for the newborn King, Jesus Christ. In their search, they brought with them precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts were significant because it foreshadowed Jesus Christ’s future. During that time, **gold** was a gift for Kings; **frankincense** (*an ancient air purifier and perfume*) was offered to God in temple worship; and **myrrh** (*an oriental remedy for intestinal worms in infants*) was used by the High Priest as an anointing oil and to prepare bodies for burial. These gifts were not only expensive but portable.’

The magi were one of the three groups of people that reacted to the Epiphany of the birth of Jesus Christ. They searched for the Child Jesus to adore him, and their adoration was visibly expressed in their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. **Who were the two other groups of people who reacted to Jesus’ birth?** They were King Herod and the chief priests and the scribes of the people. King Herod was looking for the Child Jesus, not to adore, but to eliminate him. He looked at the Child Jesus as a threat to his power and position. On the other hand, the chief priests and the scribes of the people inquired about the Child Jesus but, in reality, they don’t care about him. They chose to ignore him.

As Catholic Christians, let us make a conscious effort to be counted with the group of the magi. Let us continue to be adorers of the Lord Jesus. **How?**

1. By actively and regularly worshipping the Lord Jesus at Mass ‘with the gold of our love, the myrrh of our humility and the frankincense of our adoration.’

2. Just as the magi chose to return home following a new direction, let us allow the Lord Jesus to give us new direction towards a better way of life and follow it. Let us listen to him and let go of our selfish behaviors.
3. The magi were able to reach the Lord Jesus through a star that was shining in the dark.

Let us become 'stars' leading others closer to the Lord Jesus. Let us become 'stars' eliminating the darkness of evil around us by radiating the light of Jesus' love through selfless service, unconditional forgiveness, and compassionate care.

The encounter of the magi with the Child Jesus was an "Epiphany." This marks the first time that God revealed himself, in the person of the Christ Jesus, to the Gentiles. And, based on the gospel proclaimed, the Child Jesus enriched the magi with joy and new directions in life. We learn, therefore, that those who present their hearts with humility and give their lives lovingly to the Lord Jesus, like the magi, beautiful things happen to them.

As we celebrate today the **Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord**, let us be reminded of the call for us to reveal the Lord Jesus to others. If you have been reading our parish bulletin since November 21, 2021, I posted there the reflection question of Bishop Larry for us. It says, "**How can all the members of the Catholic Church be more effective in proclaiming the living Jesus Christ to the world?**" This question is, no doubt, a call for us to reveal Christ Jesus to others.

Three weeks ago, at our Parish Pastoral Council meeting, we tried to reflect on this question, and I will never forget what Deacon Dave shared with us about his friend, a devout Catholic, who tried to do his share in proclaiming Christ Jesus to others. Deacon Dave's friend owns a company with 650 employees. Aside from implementing the legal holidays, Deacon Dave's friend gives his employees paid break during **Catholic Holy Days of Obligations** like **Feast of the Ascension of the Lord, Feast of the Assumption, Feast of the Immaculate Conception** and so on. When his employees asked him why he was doing it, he took it as a 'teaching moment' to explain the Catholic faith to them. **Isn't that an effective/concrete way of proclaiming one's faith in Christ Jesus?**

Like Deacon Dave's friend, we can do it too. Let us start with baby steps like regularly praying before meals either at home or in the restaurant. Make the Sign of the Cross even outside of the Church. Be engaged in the outreach program of the parish. Bring others to the celebration of the Mass. Teach the

faith to others. Use social media to proclaim the Good News of the Lord Jesus. These are just some of the concrete ways we can effectively adore and proclaim the living Jesus to the world.

As we offer this Mass, let us pray for each other to be faithful adorers and proclaimers of the Lord Jesus to the world.

God bless and stay safe!