

Christ Our Hope Catholic Church
Faith in Laity Corner

Solemnity of the Feast of the Epiphany



Monday, January 07, 2019

Reading: Is 60: 1-6; Mt. 2:1-12

King Making

This week the Solemn Feast of the Epiphany is celebrated. One remembers that this great day reminds us of the ‘Awakening’ of the world to the birth of the Messiah King. Epiphany also is known as the *Manifestation* of Jesus as King. In the Orthodox churches, today is Christmas. It is the time we recall the long journey of Three Wise Men, Kings, *Men of Worth* or Magi representing different regions of the known world.

***“In the days of King Herod,* behold, Magi
from the East arrived in Jerusalem.” (Mt. 2:1)***

These strange travelers visited King Herod to present their credentials, as they were men on a mission. Their goal was to visit a new king.

“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star. (Mt. 2:2)

This visit did not rest well with the Roman representative in Israel, there is born a King? Herod was never informed that there was a king to be born in his territory.

“Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” (Mt. 2:3)

It was unsettling for the earthly king to learn from strangers that there was the possibility of a king who may rise against him.

There were ancient signs which signaled the birth of a king or royalty. These signs were observed by traveling Magi, they were following the movement of a particular heavenly satellite.

“We saw His star.” (Mt. 2:2)

This was a true sign that a king was coming to reign. It can be concluded that no King or Queen ever reigns without extensive preparation. Royalty has embedded within the fabric of such families, and handed down from generations, with its customs and cultural practices which set them apart from other ‘*common*’ folk. Yes, from early Jesus was pronounced a king, Messiah, Savior... He had acquired royal blood from His Father. Being born into this level of royalty, Jesus was the King in disguise among His people. This Messiah redefined the norms of earthly royal expectations, His birth in Bethlehem vetoed the city of Jerusalem, which would be the expected location. Trappings of pomp and royal attire were rejected as the Savior was wrapping and placed in a *food trough* for hooved animals and His birthplace a garage for the donkeys and sheep. Yet, His lowly earthly origins become dwarfed by His true worth.

The Epiphany celebrates the fact that, these visiting dignitaries knew of His Kingship but did not fully appreciate the far-reaching impact of this baby, yet they were able to make His presence known to the world. They saw the King!!

“The wealth of nations shall come to you.” (Is. 60:5)

No King goes ‘*gift seeking*’, gifts are brought before him; befitting His status, the Magi brought treasures.

“Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” (Mt. 2:11)

The metal gold has never lost its value, and from ancient times every culture

and civilization has prized it highly; gold is the symbol of royalty. Frankincense a gum from a rare tree found only in certain areas in the Middle East and North Africa has been valued for its aromatic scent and continues to be used in religious rituals as a pleasing aroma to God. This gum when lit, produces a natural and fragrant air freshener used in palaces and sought by people of great wealth. The final gift myrrh....precious spice used in preserving the body of the dead. Each gift was specially chosen as a fitting offering for a kingly child.

Let us close with a few pondering points. This Child-King raised mystery and speculation in Jerusalem, but give the Magi a memorable story to retell; that a celestial body guided them across the landscape to hover over the birthplace of a King. It is ironic, yet good that the temporal, earthly king did not know about the everlasting and eternal baby King. Herod's kingdom was limited to expand across the Sinai desert; the King Messiah's Kingdom has no end. Herod continued to kill and torture his subjects; the Christ King died on the Cross so that His subjects could have the chance for eternal life. Jewish scholars had to consult their holy books to recall what the Prophet Isaiah foretold 700 years before; the Wise men, with no books, followed the light of heaven – a star and found the Star of David. The Magi came to adore and worship so words like *'homage' 'prostrate', 'joy'* was their actions.

"They were overjoyed at seeing the star." (Mt. 2:10)

The Jews scholars and king were left in confusion, anger and made no effort to journey with these 'Wise Men.' The Magi, on the other hand, guided by the Holy Spirit quietly returned home with joy in their hearts to tell the world what they had witnessed.

On this feast of Epiphany, where are you with your gifts? Which ones did you bring to the Baby King? Let us hope you are not in confusion, checking holy books and miss the star guiding you to the King of Heaven and Earth and the joy of His birth!!

May the Star of David, bring peace and love to your heart, so that joy can be shared with all whom you meet. We remember to pray for our country asking God for a keen sense of charity as we draw closer to the end of the Nativity Season. Being mindful of those who have lost loved ones and need our prayers right now.

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