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Epiphany

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

A

Today's Gospel reading recounts the journey of the Magi – three wise men from the East. By tradition their names are:

Balthasar, Melchior, and Gaspar. They were told to look for a star that would lead them to the “newborn king of the Jews.”

Each brought a precious gift to present to the family: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

St. Odilo of Cluny wrote of these gifts: “gold,” to proclaim Christ’s kingship; “incense,” to adore his Godhead; and “myrrh” to acknowledge the mortality of the baby. Another tradition sees “myrrh” as representing the embalming of Jesus’ body after his death.

Epiphany means ‘manifestation.’ In this case, manifestation to the nations. Jesus is not solely the Jewish Messiah; he came for the entire world. “From sea to sea,” as it says in the Psalm. For Gentile as well as Jew as St. Paul proclaims: “the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners of the promise of Christ Jesus” (Second Reading).

Theologian and poet, Fr. Jim Torrens brings this home for us:

“The feast of Epiphany, looked at from the star, highlights the mission of the Church, the body of Christ, to the world. The missionary Church goes with the message of Jesus Christ to every culture and corner of the world.”

In Christ, all barriers between peoples fall. His life and message of good news takes us – beyond prejudice and beyond exclusiveness to inclusiveness and unity.

B

Back for a moment to the gifts the Magi brought. Have you ever wondered what happened to those three gifts? Author Merle Pickett has my favorite theory:

“History has never told us what became of these treasures. Legend tells us that Joseph and Mary carried them with them on their journey to Egypt and then later to Nazareth. There, they were kept in a safe place in their home. As Jesus grew in age, his mother would show the treasures to him and tell him where they came from.”

Much as we do with some special heirlooms from our past.

C

Pope Benedict XVI shares another way to reflect on the feast of the Epiphany:

“The wise men from the East embody men and women of every age who set out towards the unknown in the

search for truth. Men and women with restless hearts,
driven by a restless quest for God.

Not satisfied with the materialism that surrounds us.
Looking for something greater, something deeper.
Looking for light in the midst of darkness.
Looking for meaning.”

Today’s feast encourages us to follow our star. With faith and courage. With a sense of adventure and a willingness to risk.

With a listening heart and an abundance of trust. The values of the Gospel are the lights to help us find our way.

CONCLUSION

*As we seek the Lord
in our daily life -
amidst both the
challenges and the
blessings,
May we be aware that
only God can fill the
deepest longings
of our spirit.*

*Let us follow the Light
that leads to love and peace.*

AMEN.