

Epiphany
Sunday January 7th 2017

We hear today that **“on entering the house the Magi saw the child with Mary His Mother.”** This entrance into the house is much like every Christian’s entrance into a church. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us, “to enter into the house of God, we must cross a threshold, which symbolizes passing from the world wounded by sin; to the world of the new life to which all people are called. This entrance, this passage into new life is what the Epiphany is all about.

Once inside, the Magi do three things. First they prostrate themselves and give homage to Jesus. Their action foreshadows the faith-filled prostration of many others in the Gospel: The leper who begs Jesus for a cure; Jairus as he begs Jesus to raise his daughter to life; the disciples who witness Jesus walking on the water; the Canaanite woman seeking an exorcism for her daughter; the wife of Zebedee seeking the best for her sons; and the women and the eleven before the risen Christ. The revelation of Christ at Epiphany becomes real in us when we join the Magi in prostrate homage; that expresses our confidence in Jesus power to heal, enliven, purify, and perfect us.

“They opened their treasures.” Jesus tells us that **“where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”** Thus, the Magi open their hearts to Jesus. They divest themselves of their riches, in a way that the rich young man will refuse, because the Magi prefer to have the treasure in heaven, now manifest on earth in the human flesh of Jesus Christ. The mystery of the Epiphany calls us to give completely of ourselves so as to be able to possess the treasure of the Kingdom of God.

And the Magi **“offered Him Gifts.”** Their offering foreshadows the offertory of the Mass. When confronted with the hungry five thousand, Jesus will instruct His disciples: “Give them some food yourselves.” The gifts offered by the Magi symbolize the gift that Jesus will make of His life – the Paschal Mystery – His passion, death, resurrection and Ascension. The offering of the Magi expresses the way that Christians enter into and participate in the offering of Christ’s Body and Blood in the Eucharist. As we worship the Body of Christ with the Magi, our offering transforms **us** into **the Body of Christ**.

Like Herod we may feel some hesitation about the Epiphany. **“He was greatly troubled.”** This expression of distress is used only one other time in the Gospel of Matthew: When the disciples see Jesus walking on the water. In other words, to be troubled indicates a deficiency of faith – a deficiency that is overcome when we enter the house where Jesus is present. Our union with Him there; then sends us forth **“by another way.”** And, for this way we need not provide for ourselves, because the power of Christ, manifest today will keep us.

“They were overjoyed.” Their joy matches that of those who live the beatitudes; who find the lost sheep; who serve the Master; and who look for Jesus crucified and risen.

In short, the joy of Epiphany is the vocation of the Christian.