



Daily Reflections

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Excerpts from Today's Gospel

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ...

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king, they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for

their country by another way.

MATTHEW 2:1-12

Reflection

Today is a special feast day, the “Epiphany of the Lord.” In the Latin rite of the Catholic Church, Epiphany celebrates the revelation that Jesus was the Son of God. Matthew’s gospel focuses primarily on this revelation to the Three Wise Men. Their story is an important reminder to us to celebrate and give homage to the birth of Jesus. We are not offering gold, frankincense, and myrrh, though these can be symbolic for us as we reflect on our lived response to the birth of Jesus, our Savior.

If we use these gifts as a metaphor or symbols in our lives, gold was and is a precious commodity. The wise men brought gold as a way of expressing their deep love of God who sent his Son into the world through Mary. I marvel at the faith this took to offer their prized possession of gold to the Baby Jesus.

What would gold be for us today? It could be the gift of prayer that leads to extending ourselves in service of those most in need of presence, faith, hope and love. It could be offering a donation to a cherished service organization that tends to those without access to the necessities of life. What are we willing to offer as a sign of our own deep love and gratitude for the gift of Jesus? It’s an important question for us to ponder.

Since the early days of Christianity, Biblical scholars and theologians have offered varying interpretations of the meaning and significance of the gold, frankincense, and myrrh brought by the magi for Jesus. At the time of Jesus’ birth, it was common practice to honor a king by gifting him with gold, frankincense or myrrh.

Pope St. Gregory the Great wrote that the three gifts that were presented to Jesus are gifts for our daily lives. Gold is God’s wisdom, which can bring light to the world through each of us. Frankincense is our prayer and adoration for our Beloved. Myrrh is our daily giving of ourselves to the Lord through our ability to serve our brothers and sisters with the gifts and talents we’ve been given.

Holy Wisdom is something we all need as we seek to live holy and fruitful lives in our time. Scripture urges us to let our light shine and be a beacon that brings others to God. Prayer and adoration are the cornerstones of our faith and are something we must tend to each day -- for without an intimate relationship

with God, we can easily lose our way. Myrrh represents our response of love by giving of ourselves for the betterment of all people and all of creation.

What epiphany might be ours today as we reflect on the birth of Jesus? In everyday language, epiphany means an awakening, a new insight comes to light. Looking at the year ahead, what are your hopes and dreams as a faithful follower of Jesus? Pray for that spark of inspiration from the God who loves us unconditionally. Let us use our imaginations to ponder God's revelatory presence in our lives as we contribute toward a more loving and inclusive world.



For Pondering

- How do you describe the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh in your life?
 - What are you willing to offer as a sign of your own deep love and gratitude for the gift of Jesus?
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For Prayer

*May the wisdom of our Lord bless us this day
with new insight into how we live and pray.
May we seek to be instruments of God's loving presence
in our thoughts, words, deeds, and actions this day and in the year to come.*

Amen.

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