**Epiphany**

 On Christmas night, by the aid of an Angel, baby Jesus was first revealed to the Shepherds. The Shepherds represented the Jews who were first supposed to recognize and receive the Messiah. Today, we celebrate the Epiphany or Manifestation of God incarnate as Jesus Christ to the Gentiles through the aid of a star or light. The Magi represents the rest of humanity. The star that led them to Baby Jesus represented the light of Christ that burns in our hearts impelling humanity to desire to know Jesus, even if we are not aware of the call. The Epiphany is a revelation that has two fold-meaning about God and the Gentiles.

Firstly, regarding God, Epiphany reveals to the rest of the world that the savior is born and He is in our midst. It is the revelation of our God who took up our flesh to become one of us. Secondly, the appearance of the Magi, the 3 wise men, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar let us know that God’s saving grace does not belong only to the Jews, but that His saving grace also belongs to Gentiles. The appearance of the Magi points to the revelation that all people are “co-heirs” to eternal life and graced to become children of God.

In our first reading, we heard how God through Prophet Isaiah, explained these two folds of revelation to the Jews. The first revelation or prophesy was about the light that has come amongst Jews. This light has come in the glory of the Lord to shine upon them. Jesus is the light and the source of the glory of Jerusalem foretold by Isaiah. The light has come to overcome the thick darkness. The thick darkness is sin and death in the world.

It is through the light of Christ, reflected by the Jews, that other nations and kings shall walk and come to know the Savior. It is this light that brought Caravans of camels with gifts of gold and frankincense form Gentile nations to the Source of the light. This points us to the coming of the Magi with the aid of a star for navigation. Prophet Isaiah prophesied that they would bring gifts of gold, frankincense as presents for the Child. As foretold by Isaiah, they came proclaiming, praising, and worshiping the Lord. God did not reveal the gift of myrrh to Isaiah as one of the presents.

In our second reading, St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, made it clear to them that he was chosen by God to be an instrument that would bring the Good News to the Gentiles. He indicated that he received the revelation through the grace of God and it was not something he learned or knew on his own. St. Paul expressed that the mystery of our salvation, was not revealed to other generations before his generation, as it is now revealed to him and other apostles and prophets. The Good News is that all humans are given the same promise of salvation if they believe in Jesus Christ and in His Gospel. Paul let the Ephesians know that God has made us all, members of the one body of Christ and that Christ is the head of the body.

In our Gospel reading, we are reminded of the story of the Magi who came from the East in search of the new born King of the Jews. The new born King is the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. It is the story of the Epiphany or appearance of a Child born to save the world. The good news did not unfold or was not made known to all but only to good apples such as the Magi, but it was also made known to bad apples such as Herod who found out from the Magi.

The Magi, who were kings who left their countries in search of the newborn King of the Jews. Unlike Herod, they were not threatened by the news that a King born who would be greater than any earthly king. Instead of being threatened, they received the news with joy and brought meaningful gifts for the Baby. On finding Him, they did Him homage and worshiped Him I humility by prostrating on the ground to acknowledge Him as their God. By giving the gift of gold, they recognized the Child as King, by the gift of frankincense, they recognized the divinity of the Child and by the gift of myrrh, they knew He was destined to die for us.

On the contrary, Herod, also a king, was fearful that his lineage as king would be over with the birth of the newborn King. Fear drove Herod to act irrationally. Fear drove him to desire to exterminate the perceived threat to his throne. He was consumed by lust for power and he thought he could keep his throne by the shedding of innocent blood, of babies and children fulfilling the prophesy of Prophet Jeramiah. ***“*A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be consoled, since they were no more” (Jer. 31:15)**

The questions that we should ask ourselves are, are we like the Magi who received the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus with joy and are ready give up sin and the works of the Devil? Are we ready to truly worship Him? Or are we like Herod who received the news in fear? Are we like Herod who wanted to be in control by holding on to power that did not belong to him but only to God? Or are we ready to step out of darkness into the light of Christ? Do we want to surrender to God and let Him lead us to eternal life? Or do we see God has being merciful that as long as I know His name, without repentance, He would forgive?

Jesus’ mission statement at the beginning of His ministry was, **“This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel” (**Mark 1:15). Repentance or giving up our sinfulness and believing in the Gospel are requirements for receiving the mercy of God.

 As we joyfully come to receive Jesus, let us thank Him for the gift of Himself in the Eucharist.

AN EPIPHANY PRAYER

***“Lord Jesus, may your light shine our way, as once it guided the steps of the Magi: that we too may be led into your presence and worship You, the Child of Mary, the Word of the Father, the King of nations, the savior of mankind to whom be glory for ever”*** *(Frank Colquhoun).*