

SAID ED January 5, 2014

Epiphany

Today we celebrate the Feast of Epiphany. It is the day in which we traditionally mark the arrival of the Wise Men from the East. These men, searchers for truth, studied the skies in ancient belief that the birth of a king would be heralded in the heavens and proclaimed by the stars. They saw the Star of Bethlehem and they followed it from their home land, presumably in Mesopotamia (now Iraq or Iran). It led them to the very manger in which the Christ Child was resting.

Several things about the story of the Magi are instructive for us. They were royal persons of good will whose search for truth was rewarded. The message was given both to the humble shepherds of the fields and to the royal seekers of truth in the East. God's message of salvation is universal for all people, no matter how humble or exalted, rich or poor. In search of the King whose birth was announced by the star, they followed protocol and went to the local king.

Herod feigned a desire to come and worship the king as well, when in fact, his murderous heart, motivated by jealousy, looked only to save his own kingdom and thus he ordered the slaughter of the innocents. The Magi did not return to Herod he requested. Prompted by an angel they went back to their own country by another route and did not inform Herod. Sometimes the love of God takes us outside the confines of civil authority. The love of God supersedes that authority.

The whole point of the Feast we celebrate today is that God's universal salvific will. God has unconditional love for all creation; God's love knows no bounds. For followers of Christ, it is the basic organizing principle of our way of life. We are privileged to know God through Jesus Christ. Not everyone knows God through Christ in the way we do.

The kings who came from the East were not Jews. They were Gentiles -- foreigners, strangers, members of the "great unwashed." And yet, in their search for truth, they were welcomed by the Christ Child and Joseph and Mary. We would do well to ask ourselves if we receive searchers of truth with the same openness. Epiphany is a good time to ask ourselves if we are making Christ manifest in the world by the way we live and love and care for others. Are we acting in the way that the Lord would have us do?

The Christmas Season continues into next weekend when we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord. At the 9:30, 11:30am and 6:00pm masses we will officially enroll over 200 of our young people in our First Eucharist and Confirmation Preparation Programs. It seems fitting that we do this as Jesus starts his official ministry with his Baptism in the Jordan.

Finally, let me say a special word of thanks for your generosity in our Christmas collection. We can be very proud of our efforts to build up the Reign of God in our community.

Have a great week!

