



## Epiphany Gospel - Mt 2:1-12

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.

Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people,  
he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea,  
for thus it has been written through the prophet:

And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
since from you shall come a ruler,  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.”

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.

## Epiphany

By Servant of God, Bishop Giaquinta, 1977

I spoke first of our examination of conscience to ask ourselves what we give to our brothers. Let us think, I say again, of the millions of persons who need us. Today we are used to speaking of the Third World, but the Third World is not far from us: perhaps it is in the dwelling across the street from us, perhaps in the apartment close to ours, perhaps in the person who works near us, because as there is a Third World of physical hunger, so

there is a Third World of interior hunger of those who are disconsolate, at times desperate, of those who need a degree of affection, of those who need God, of those who need a brother who takes them by the hand and says, "Courage, the Lord wants your good, humanity still has a place for you". Very often our brothers have these sorts of needs. Perhaps we cannot give great gifts to the Third World, great sums of money, but to the person near us who is in need, whose soul, whose spirit, is in need, we can, we must, give. Give what? What Christ gave to the Magi, what the Magi gave to Christ.

Christ gave light to the Magi. So much ignorance; how many persons exist among us who do not know the things of God! But we who call ourselves Christians, who say we love the Lord, who believe we know His message, why do we not give this light to the others? Here is the gift we can and must give to the brothers.

Reading the Gospel, we know the Three Wise Men offered Christ three realities that are three symbols: gold, incense, and myrrh. Gold to ancient peoples was a symbol of love: love yourselves, love the brothers, want their good, know how to smile at them, the small to the great, the healthy and the sick, the ill and the aged, the not aged... The gift of a smile that shows we are brothers and sisters... I am convinced that when there is true interior love it shows itself in this way: with difficulty a brother or sister closes his or her heart! But if this had to happen, look then at the other gift we find in the Gospel: the incense that one burns in churches, which is the symbol of prayer. Where we can't reach, God can through our prayer. To pray for the brothers, to pray for one's enemies, I would say above all for one's enemies, to pray for those who do not want to hear us; for those who despise us.

The gift is myrrh, symbol of sacrifice: to know how to sacrifice ourselves for others. It is not enough to pray for them, it is not enough to love them with words, not enough to enlighten them when necessary, we must sacrifice as we think most effective, so that any barriers of individualism, of diffidence, will come down, and we can build a brotherhood of love in Christ, Our Lord.

And I am convinced that if we would act thus with the brothers, if this were the Epiphany of every day and not just one time a year, if every day we would know how to sacrifice ourselves for him, in our life time it would happen as it did for the Magi. The Madonna accepted their gifts, and, I am certain of it, as the old Simeon did, took the Child and gives Him into their embrace, so they could give Him a loving kiss. So it will be for us, if we will love our brothers and sisters: Our Lady will give the Baby Jesus to us so that we and love Him and give Him a kiss. May the Baby Jesus bless our families and us. Amen.

