

Epiphany of the Lord

Isa 60:1-6
Eph 8:2-3, 5-6
Mt 2:1-12

Today we hear once again the story of the wise men who embarked on a long and dangerous journey in search of Jesus, the Messiah. They saw a star, risen in the East. How did they come to know exactly what it meant? Studying the stars was the occupation of these wise men. God made use of something familiar to them to make them see His will. By certain grace of God, they knew that it heralded the birth of the Messiah whom the people of Israel were expecting. It took a lot of courage and trust on the part of these men to make that long journey. They left behind their families, their comfort, and everything else. It could not have been easy for them to explain the reason for their journey. But they took the best they had with them as an offering to the newborn King of Israel. It was a long and difficult journey, but they persevered.

Our life, too, is a journey toward God from birth to death. It is a spiritual journey of our heart working its way toward God. We are not alone in our journey. Many have gone before us. But we all have the same destination as our goal. We all will certainly meet with difficulties and hardships on our journey. We need to persevere, like the wise men, to reach our goal of encountering God. They were prepared to make any number of sacrifices because their goal was worthwhile. When we face difficulties and hardships in our life journey, let us remember that our goal is worthwhile.

We need to leave aside everything that can lure us from the way or hold us up on our journey. Sometimes we can be held up by the fear of what other people will say. H. G. Wells once said, "The voice of our neighbor is louder than the voice of God." The three wise men paid little attention to what others said, including the King. They were attracted by the beauty and greatness of the star, and they followed it to the end. Jesus is our star. The beauty of His life and teachings attracts us. In order to follow the star, we need to detach from the things that tie us down, including human respect. It is not the verdict of public opinion but the verdict of God that settles our destiny.

Epiphany means manifestation. Through the visit of the three pagan kings, Jesus manifested Himself, not only as a Savior of Jews, but also as the Savior of the Gentiles. He manifested Himself as the Savior of the entire humankind. This feast challenges each of us to manifest Christ to the world. The three kings visited Christ to do Him homage and offer Him their gifts. That is what we have come here for on Sundays—to worship the Lord and to give Him our gifts. The wise men did not go to Christ to get something out of Him but to offer Him the best they had. Similarly, we come to Mass not so much to get something but to give—the more we give, the more we receive. If a man and woman enter marriage asking themselves what they can get out of it, then it is going to fall apart soon. If they ask, "What can I give?" then they are going to live happily thereafter.

Christ manifests His presence at every Mass in the form of bread and wine. His Body and Blood is the food for our journey. Let us adore Him who will soon be present on the altar and offer our gifts. We have come not to get but to give.