

## **HOMILY for THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY – Year ABC**

This Sunday the Church celebrates the Feast of the Epiphany to mark the divine revelation to the whole world. If Christmas reminds us of God's revelation to the people of God, Epiphany tells us how that amazing revelation was shared with the whole world. The three kings represent the whole world because they were from the East with their various backgrounds in addition to their profession of astrology. Here is how this Sunday's Gospel tells us about the three kings & this revelation. It says, "After Jesus' birth in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod, astrologers from the East arrived one day in Jerusalem inquiring, 'Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We observed his star at its rising & have come to pay him homage.' At this news, King Herod became disturbed, & with him all Jerusalem. Summoning all the chief priests & scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born." That is basically the story of the three kings who received the divine revelation through a strange star & wanted to get to the bottom of it. They were rewarded for their diligent work & given a chance to meet the newborn king of the Jews.

As I reflect on the Feast of the Epiphany & its remarkable story, I'm reminded of these spiritual lessons for us to imitate. First of all, the three kings were able to meet Jesus the newborn king because they searched diligently & paid attention to their spiritual life. They were astrologers by profession, but did not let their profession cloud up their spiritual life. They scanned the entire sky everyday to look for new stars & different planets. Their diligent search paid off one day as they found a strange star in the sky. They also did not turn off their spiritual life & assume that it was just another star in a mysterious universe. Instead, they continued to study & track it to its original location. In the meantime, they stopped by Jerusalem to pick up all the spiritual clues about the newborn king & learn more about the strange star. Because of their diligent search & openness to the spiritual world, they were rewarded handsomely with a special meeting with the newborn king & His Holy Family at the manger in Bethlehem.

Unlike the three kings, the people of our modern time do not search for God daily or let their hearts be open to the spiritual world. Instead, they close up their hearts to any spiritual things & ignore God's signs to them every day. Ironically, they tune into the lifestyle of the secular world & listen only to fun things. That is why they think that science always contradicts or undermines the spiritual world. But, the story of today's feast reminds us that science & faith can co-exist to help us learn more about God & creation. Three scientists or astronomers were able to let the Creator open their minds to the realm of faith & lead them to the newborn savior of the world. They did not close up their hearts to God's revelation through a strange star or ignore it. Rather, they allowed God & the spiritual world to show them the way & let them see something that prophets & visionaries have dreamt about for years. Because of their cooperation with the realm of faith, they were able to witness the most amazing revelation of God in the human history. Their incredible experience is a good reminder for people of our time to be open to the realm of faith in order to experience remarkable things. So, if someone says that science & faith cannot co-exist, please share with that person the story of the Epiphany & how three kings were able to make it happen. Also, this feast encourages us to search for God & pay attention to God's revelation to us every day. If we do, we might hit the spiritual jackpot like the three kings did & meet God in one of those revelations. The problem with our current

world is that it does not search for God or recognize God's daily revelations to it. That is why it continues to be in darkness & experience hate & violence.

Another spiritual lesson that this feast can teach us is that evil is real & can pretend to give us all the right answers as we see in King Herod. He pretended to consult with the chief priests & the three kings about the Messiah's birth. He even tricked the public to think that he would love to pay tribute to the newborn Messiah. But, truthfully he hid his evil intention deep down in his heart & wanted to kill baby Jesus. He might fool the world, but he could not do that to God. For God knew his evil intention & warned the three kings to return home by another way while telling Joseph in a dream to take the Holy Family into hiding by fleeing across Egypt. Like the public back then, many of us can easily be fooled by the power of evil & darkness around us. It often knows what to say & how to act to convince the public that it is a "good guy," but in reality it is not. So, don't be fooled & assume that something is good when it pretends to say & do things that we like.

Thankfully, the three kings were able to see King Herod's wicked intention & decide to stay away from him. That is another important spiritual lesson for us since some of us seem to fail to recognize the face of evil for some reason or need to separate ourselves from it as soon as possible. We let the power of evil control us & enslave us. We enable it to keep doing damages in our world instead of standing up to it & separating ourselves from it. The three kings surely give us a good example of standing up to the power of evil and running away from it once they recognized it.

My dear brothers & sisters, we learn that on this feast of the Epiphany the Lord reveals Himself to the three kings & the whole world through the strange star in the sky & His own presence at the manger. The three kings opened their hearts & minds to that revelation & were rewarded with an amazing encounter with the Lord at the manger. He continues to reveal Himself to us & the world every day. We need to listen to the messages & watch for the signs that He sends us each day. If we do that & know how to interpret those messages & signs, we might have an incredible encounter with Him like the three kings did on this day.