

Fr. Rudy's Reflections
January 5, 2025
The Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

The Light of Christ

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

Throughout the ages, the journey of the magi to Bethlehem to pay homage to the Christ child is one of the most beautiful stories of the Christmas season, resplendent with radiance, mystery, and excitement. It is one of the most remembered stories from Scripture, as we have reflected on the imagery of this dramatic scene from the time of our childhood. A guiding star—the light of Christ—compels a group of foreigners, likely astronomers or learned men of the East, to travel hundreds of miles over rough terrain with only a light in the night sky pointing the way. Why did they do this? Because these courageous men believed that at the end of their journey they would find “the way, the truth, and the life” in Christ the Lord, just as we are called to do in our lives today (John 14: 6).

According to Saint Pope John Paul II, the magi represent the peoples of the whole earth who, in the light of the Lord's birth, set out on the way leading to Jesus and, in a certain sense, are the first to receive that salvation inaugurated by his birth and brought to fulfilment in the paschal mystery of his Death and Resurrection. Through their eyes, ears, and voices, they became our first missionaries to proclaim the fullness of light only Jesus can bestow upon us.

As part of this story, when the magi are united with this child, they fall to their knees to worship and present to him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts symbolically describe the mission of Christ here on earth. Gold symbolizes a gift fit for a king, frankincense signifies the presence of a priest, and finally, myrrh is a gift to anoint the body to preserve and protect its integrity.

We should remember the Epiphany is both an *event*—the magi's arduous journey to adore the newborn King—as well as a *symbol* of the *Word made flesh* who dwelt for a time in the midst of humankind and changed lives and hearts for the world's ultimate and promised salvation. Today, the journey of the magi continues to guide all nations and people on their *own* journey toward the Lord, and in homage for his sacrifice and love, offer their own treasures and gifts of themselves. His light, his love, and his enduring presence guide and inspire our lives. And if we look up beyond ourselves *to him*, we find just what we are looking for.

A blessed Epiphany to all.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Rudy