

Fr. Rudy's Reflections  
The Epiphany of the Lord  
January 7, 2024

## The Transformational Power of Faith

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

*"Today the Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, one whom the whole universe cannot contain, now enclosed in a tiny body. As they look, they believe and do not question, as their symbolic gifts bear witness: incense for God, gold for a king, myrrh for one who is to die."*—St. Peter Chrysologus

Today, the first Sunday in the new calendar year 2024, we celebrate the popular Christmas feast of the Epiphany, one that describes the long journey of the wise men from the East, who were the first of many to come and worship the Messiah who God promised to the world. These "magi"—whether they were scholars, astronomers, or astrologers—followed a bright star in the sky that lit a fire in their lives to such an extent they decided to make an arduous trek to Judea to find the source of their wonderment. These "seekers" who lived more than two thousand years ago, parallel our own spiritual journey we make throughout our lives. They sought, they saw, they acted upon, and they ultimately transformed their lives as a result. And they chose a different route to return to their country, after being warned in a dream, because they realized their lives would never be the same. As Bishop Fulton Sheen rightly stated, "Of course, they went to their home country by another way, because no one ever comes to Christ and goes back the same way he came."

With this thought in mind, has your life been transformed by Christ? Do you always live by this transforming power of faith? Do you offer yourself—your mind, your heart, your talents and the grace of all things—to God in thanksgiving? Indeed, the Magi's gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the Child Jesus represent their homage to him as king, the divine, and to the suffering he would endure on the cross. All of us must consider whether we are giving our own precious gifts to God and others in our lives in appreciation for all we have been given in this world and in reverence to our faith. Yes, we too are seekers of truth and knowledge by just being human, as the Magi were thousands of years ago. But in this secular, somewhat compromised world, if the answers we seek prove difficult, do we still take the path that leads us to God, or do we take the easy road that is safe and less demanding? Jesus Christ promised us that "the one who seeks, finds" (Matthew 7: 8), but *we must realize God seeks us as well.*

Let us find in our relationship with him this transformational understanding of our Lord Jesus Christ: as king of our lives here on earth, in his divine presence in all we do, and in tribute to his sacrifice of suffering and death on the cross to save us from the sins of the world.

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Rudy