Jesu Juva

**The Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord**

Text: St. Matthew 2:1-12

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Feast of the Nativity and the twelve days of Christmas come to an end this night. Tonight, we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany or the Feast of the manifestation of God in the Man, Jesus.

The ancient Church realized that such a feast is necessary. It is necessary because while the Nativity commemorates the historical fact that Jesus, our Savior, is born of human flesh; that He was born and lived among us as a man, His birth would be of no consequence if we were not convinced that this Man, this helpless Infant, is also God. The purpose of this feast, and its season, is to reveal that this cute bundle of joy, who has two ears, two eyes, a nose, fingers, and toes, just as do you and I, that this Child who nurses at His blessed mother’s breast, who has His diaper changed, who, due to His human weakness, must be cared for in every way, is not only the Son of Man; He is the Son of God.

With His nativity, God appeared in the flesh of men and is in every way, except without sin, a man. In Epiphany, this Man, Jesus, who is Christ the Lord, appears before all the world and is in every way, God. To the Feast of the Nativity, had to be added the Feast of God’s appearance, lest the Nativity be in vain.

In his Gospel, Saint John clearly reminds us of this in his own masterful way, *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us [Christmas], and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth [Epiphany].”*

Thus, Epiphany and its season, present clear proof that the Man Jesus is God in the flesh. This season, in particular, recalls the signs and wonders of Jesus, for the signs and wonders had only one purpose, to prove to men that Jesus is *“God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father….”* Only the miracles of Christ could prove to men that Jesus is truly God. Yet, Jesus’ whole life is an Epiphany. His life is a manifestation to the entire world that Jesus is, indeed, God. This night, we hear God the Father’s acknowledgment of the Man, Jesus, as His only-begotten Son.

Yet, the world lives and walks in darkness. Though God is manifest in Jesus, still, the world does not walk in the true knowledge of God. It is as the prophet Isaiah prophesied, *“For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people….”*

This is not darkness as in day vs. night; it is the inner darkness of the heart, mind, and soul. Jesus expresses it this way, *“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”* Our Lord is speaking here, of the ability of the soul to see God, to sense and understand who God is, and to live before God in childlike innocence, even as we confess in the meaning of the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed— *“…that I may be His own and live under Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness…to all eternity.”*

Yet, though the glory of God has been made known, though the light of Christ shines into the darkness, the darkness does not comprehend it; Jesus is the true Light *“…which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”*

Still, while the whole world lays in darkness, the Church of God is bathed in the light of Christ, for *“as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His Name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

Led by the Magi, the Church of God follows the star that we may be brought to the Light that is Christ Jesus. Our King, our Savior, has come that we may walk in the brightness of His marvelous Light, for the glory of our Lord has risen upon us. When the Magi inquired of the newborn King, all of Israel knew what they meant. They knew where He could be found but they refused to go to Bethlehem—there was no Epiphany for them. But Gentiles came to the Light, to the brightness of His rising.

For this reason, the Magi represent the whole Gentile world, *“for unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.”* Jesus does not belong to any one people, race, or nation; He belongs to the whole world, the King and Savior of all.

The Magi found what they were seeking and rejoiced. These messengers of truth had not followed the Star in vain. They found more than they were looking for. They found the Anointed One, the Christ, and they fell down and worshiped Him, and having worshiped Him they went home by a different way.

The Magi followed the star and came to know God. We, the people of God, know God, not through the manifestation of the Son to which we are led by the star of Bethlehem, but through the revelation of the love that sacrificed itself on the Cross of Calvary for the life of the world. We live in the Light of that sacrificial love where is found faith, life, and salvation. That sacrificial love is the Light that shines into the darkness and no darkness can overcome. It is the glory of God revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ, and it shines upon us as we walk in the light of His countenance.

Because we walk in His Light, we reflect the Light of His glory, a city set upon a hill to fill the world with light, the Light of the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Like the Magi, you may now travel home by a new path, abandoning your old way, for you have been called by Christ Jesus to walk another way. Proceed, therefore by a new path with Jesus carrying you, lighting the way through the darkness of this world. Jesus is calling to you, inviting you to return to your true home, the paradise from which Adam and Eve were driven out. Come and walk before the Lord in the Land of the living, for our Lord, who has delivered your soul from death, will keep your feet from falling and He will dry all the tears from your eyes.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

 Soli Deo Gloria

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