

NOTES FROM THE LITURGIST

DID YOU OPEN YOUR GIFTS?

There are usually different ways by which a child reacts of receiving a gift on his/her birthday or at Christmas. The “spoiled” child opens the gift, take the new toy, and runs to a corner to play with the toy by him/herself. The “well-trained” child opens the gift, takes the toy, and invites other children (siblings or friends) to play with the toy along with him/her. And others they don’t like to share for the first time but in the end, they will invite you to be their playmate.

This weekend is the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. If Christmas is the feast of receiving a gift from God, Epiphany is the feast of opening the gift and discovering that gift is not just for ourselves but is meant to be shared with others. Epiphany is, therefore, the feast of sharing with others the gift that we have received at Christmas. For the “child that is born for us, the child that is given to us at Christmas is destined not just to be the “king of the Jews” but the savior of the world.

Epiphany, is the feast of the revelation of Jesus to the nations. The gift received at Christmas has a universal significance. This universality is signified by the “magi from the East” who represent all peoples of the world. Epiphany is, therefore, a profound missionary feast and underlines the missionary vocation of every Christian, of every believer in Jesus. For one cannot receive the gift of Christmas without sharing it with others. One cannot be a follower of Jesus without sharing his good news with others.

The feast of Epiphany asks us to be especially attentive in today’s many “seekers” represented by the magi from the East in search of the child who was born the “king of Jews.” This search of today can take many forms – **the search for truth**, that we encounter God in the personhood of Jesus. God our Father is no longer a stranger to us because we know him through his Son. We know his feelings, sentiments towards us human beings because He has become human like us. For meaning in life, that being always ready to love others by being of service to them in their needs. **For bringing justice and peace in the world, for we are the example of reconciliation and unity among the peoples of the world.** Epiphany invites us, Christians and followers of Jesus, to be the star that aroused the curiosity of the magi, led them on their journey, and guided them in their search. But like the star which guided the magi, we are to shine not in Jerusalem, among Herod and his chief priests and scribes, but in Bethlehem, with Mary and Joseph and the newborn child. For Jesus is to be found not in the center of power and riches but among the poor and the lowly.

However, this time let us ask ourselves, what are we doing? What is Christmas for us? Do we find Jesus in the parties? Social events? Or did we find Jesus in our gifts?

We, Christians, will be this star for the “faith-seekers” of today if we take seriously our missionary vocation, it is not enough to believe in Jesus. It is necessary also to proclaim Him to others. We cannot be like the spoiled child who runs to a corner to enjoy the gift by him/herself. We must be like the “well-trained” child who invites others to share in the gift that he/she has received. Only then will our celebration of Christmas reach true fulfillment. Indeed, Epiphany is the end of the Christmas season. **Happy Epiphany to each and every one!**

-ace tupasi