

What Gift Do I offer to the New Born Baby-Emmanuel?

In the feast of Epiphany, we celebrate the showing forth of the newly born baby- Jesus, not only to his people but to the gentiles, meaning to the whole world. Christ is the light that will enlighten all nations and give the fullness of life to all people. The prophecy of Isaiah we read in the first reading describes this showing forth and the gifts that would be presented to the newly born baby- Jesus. In line with Prophet Isaiah, St. Paul in the second reading calls himself a steward of God's grace, who has been called and sent to share the gift of God's grace to all people.

We see in the gospel today how different people reacted to the message of the birth of Jesus. First is King Herod. He felt insecure hearing about the birth of a new king. To protect his kingdom, he ordered the killing of more than two thousand innocent. Also, we see the indifferent reaction of the chief priests. The way the chief priests responded when asked about the news of the newly born king showed that they paid limited attention to it. Third, is the reaction of the Magi- three wise men from east-Mesopotamia.

The Magi offered the best of gifts to Jesus; the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold - the king of metals, symbolizes that Jesus is born to be a king, but not in the worldly sense, rather a king that will reign through the life of service and sacrifice. The gift of frankincense is a gift for a priest, the sweetest perfume use in the temple. It symbolizes that Jesus is the priest who will open the door of salvation to all people. Myrrh is the gift, an embalmment balm, which symbolizes the mission of Jesus to lay down his life for us so that we may have life and have it in abundance.

We have to reflect and ask ourselves the gift we give to Jesus. Is our gift to welcome Emmanuel the gift of heard heartedness as Herod or indifference as the chief priests or best gifts as the Magi? The best gift we can give to him is our life. We do that by our total trust and confidence in him. The new year, 2021, brings us lots of hopes that things will turn out to be better, especially with the Covid 19 vaccine we hope will end the pandemic. Let us turn to God for the strength we need in this new year to be our best and to do our best. Amen.