

Feast of the Epiphany Year A

It seems that it is very popular to do a baby reveal and it seems like this is what is happening in the feast of the Epiphany. The gifts that are given our Lord reveal His kingship, His divinity and His mortality. But I also believe that the three kings, or Magi, are meant to be an epiphany to us as well. Listen to the verse from the Psalms: *Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.* This is a very fascinating feast we must admit. Three highly intelligent men, perhaps kings, come to a stable and see a little baby and are so taken by the experience that they lay their treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh at the child's feet and bow down and worship. There was nothing kingly about his robe. There was nothing kingly about the place where he was. There was nothing kingly about the company that he kept. Yet these great men bowed down and worshipped. They not only worshipped but they adored our Lord. I find this feast a real epiphany. These men went by the royal court of Herod and found a stable – amazing! They risked their lives, they travelled great distances to encounter this new King who could do nothing for them. He could not grant them lands or favours, they only wanted to see Him. What a witness to me these great men are who adore at such a cost when I only adore at my convenience. Why did they do this? The Jewish priests did not come, only the shepherds and these strange wisemen or Magi.

To worship: to bow down to something superior. That is what they did. I remember the story of Fr Lazar. He was a holy man in my eyes and I was blessed to know him. He told me that as a young man he saw his father, who was the toughest man in the village, kneel before the Blessed Sacrament and beat his breast in repentance. He knew who was God.

Adoration. When was the last time you and I really adored the Lord, acknowledged His Kingly, His Godly Presence? Could anyone tell that God is here and worshipped by our conduct? I know we are not to do things for show as if to say, “Look how greatly I bow down everyone,” but could anyone tell that God was here? Have we ever taking time and thanked Him for being physically present here?

I did not grow up with Adoration nor did I really know anything about it actually. As I learned more about the Real Presence it remained pretty intellectual. *Okay God is really present here* but I still had very little inclination to Adoration. Every time I went I felt the hour drag by. My first time it really changed for me was at a retreat called a Youth 2000 Retreat. At this retreat, they had the Blessed Sacrament exposed for the entire retreat. The Blessed Sacrament was on this thing called a burning bush. It was a massive candelabra with, it seemed, hundreds of candles. At night they needed someone to stay with the Blessed Sacrament so even though we had been doing work all day at the retreat, the five of us guys from our team stayed with the Blessed Sacrament. We were allowed to sleep as long as one of us was awake. I spent most of my night sleeping. But when I woke up in the morning, I felt an awe like I had never experienced before toward God. I knew more in my heart that He was king. This was my first experience of knowing Him present in the Eucharist in more than an intellectual way.

One of the young ladies I was working with when I was doing retreat ministry told me that she had missed most of her Confirmation classes because of her love for soccer. Her teacher told her it was okay as long as she simply spent the same time that she missed adoring the Lord. So she did and found that it changed her life and she after continued to go afterwards.

As I travelled throughout the USA, I went to many churches that had perpetual adoration and one of the priests told me that wherever there is perpetual adoration there is a lowering of crime in the area. So I decided to look into this. The most amazing story is about a city in Mexico where there was gang war and their murder rate was just under four thousand. Sometimes as many as forty people were murdered in a day. They started adoration and in a few years the murder rate went down to two hundred and fifty. This is really the lion laying down with the lamb. In our own hearts it is so important that we adore. It reorders our hearts when we adore, and helps us not to adore things that are harmful.

Think of our actions when we came into the Church today. When we genuflected, did we acknowledge who we genuflected to? We must have a relationship with our actions. Have we ever thanked the Lord for being present here? We must return to a relationship with our actions. A time we have in the Mass to adore is the time for Holy Communion. I was thinking about the wise men and how when they travelled to see the King they probably wondered what they would see, who they would encounter. We, too, must do that as we come up to receive Holy Communion. What will we experience, my Lord, when You come into our hearts? I think we can only have this spirit of adoration if we pray for it. We must pray to have a relationship with our actions, so we, too, can adore.