Epiphany 2024

MDP of God

In today’s gospel—when the Magi—often referred to as the wise men or the three kings---when they arrived at the stable Jesus was born in---the stable was still there

That’s a little different then our experience this weekend—when you arrived here and found our old stable—the barn that had been converted into a church---is now gone

*But just like the Magi---*when you entered here today---you came into the presence of the Lord of lords—the King of kings—the long awaited Savior of the world---the all-powerful God in the flesh

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Unlike us however, the Magi didn’t take the presence of the King of kings for granted

 They made great sacrifices to come into His presence

They faced the heat of the desert---they had to cross mountains—they risked robbers and thieves---*most of us didn’t have that difficult of a time getting here*

They found the all-powerful God in the form of a little baby---we find Him mostly in the form of bread and wine

I say mostly---*because we can find Jesus in one another*—(look around…..)**since we’re all members of the Body of Christ**

We today can find Jesus in the poor*---because He taught us that whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters*---**that we actually do for Him**

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As blessed as the Magi were to come into the very presence of God in the flesh---*you and I are actually much more blessed*---because not only can we come into His presence---but He chooses to enter into us---*to allow us to consume Him* **so that we can grow in His life**

I often ponder about how blessed we are---in the OT only a handful of people were ever able to come into the Holy of holies in the Temple---but you and I can come into a much holier place any time of the day or night---by coming into our church or our adoration chapel---**into the presence of Jesus—God in the flesh-- truly present**

As St Paul pointed out in our 2nd reading today---all throughout history up until that point—God had not revealed Himself to the whole world---but now He has

 Now every nation on earth can adore Him

 Now people of every nation on earth can come into the family of God

Now the light of Jesus can enlighten people of every race, every nationality, people of every language

As our 1st reading today from the Prophet Isaiah said, “Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! (The Church by the way is the new Jerusalem)  -Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples;
*but upon you the LORD shines*, **and over you appears his glory.**Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance.
Raise your eyes and look about; they all gather and come to you:.. Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow…”

My friends—when you contemplate Jesus’ love for you does your heart throb and overflow?

When you come into the presence of Jesus are you overjoyed as the Magi were in today’s gospel?

My friends for the time the Magi travelled to see Jesus---probably several months---we don’t know for sure—the bible doesn’t specify the time---but they probably came from what is modern Iran—which is roughly 1400 miles from Jerusalem---so it probably took months

And during those months—their main focus of life was coming into the presence of the newborn King of the Jews

That should lead us to ask---how much am I personally focused on coming into the presence of Jesus?

Do I yearn to be with my King? Do I yearn to grow closer to my King and Lord?

 **Or** do I take my relationship with Him for granted?

Or worse---do I see the demands that Jesus makes on me ---obeying the laws of God—giving Him worship in Mass---making sacrifices to build up the Church and to help the poor------ *Do I see those things as coveted opportunities to grow closer to Jesus*---**or do I see them as a burden? As an obstacle to doing what I want to do?** As something I have to do but regret or resent having to do?

My friends—the travels of the Magi---their dedication in coming into the presence of the newborn King of the Jews--- their putting their lives on hold as they sought out Jesus---should remind us of how incredibly blest we are---and should inspire us to want to grow closer to Him

Should inspire us to do whatever it takes to grow in our in our faith—to grow in our hope---to grow in love of our Lord Jesus Christ---Amen? Amen?