

The Epiphany of the Lord  
January 3, 2021  
“Accepting Truth”

Is 60:1-6  
Eph 3:2...6  
Mt 2:1-12

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

One of the most difficult challenges of anyone’s life is always to recognize and admit the truth. The truth can be very difficult to accept. Often enough, we want things, or life itself, to be other than what it is. Facts are facts. Facts cannot be denied without great detriment to society and to ourselves. Politically speaking, the last four years have seen denial on the part of one of our political parties. And now, many of the other party can’t accept the truth of the last election in November!

Religious truths are hard to accept. Religious truths often make demands upon us. Often these are moral demands which will require change on our part – While other truths demand the assent of faith with trust in the hidden God whom we cannot see!

However, perhaps the most difficult of all truth to accept is the truth about ourself. All of us have blind spots and maybe even whole areas of our personality and life that we cannot see or know. Often enough, these are areas of sinfulness that harm others and which keep us from development and maturity. Unfortunately, when confronted with these truths, we can resist them, alter them, deny them – or worst of all – condemn those who bring them to our attention!

Today, Isaiah tells us that the embrace of God’s plan always included more than only the Chosen People. Yes, it was from that people that the Messiah would come – However, that Messiah would establish a universal kingdom which would include and welcome every person ever created.

Thus, Isaiah speaks of a new Jerusalem, to which every person, race, and nation would belong. Even women and children – who, often, were denied so much in that culture of male domination – would be on equal terms with everyone else. Moreover, in that same prophecy, Isaiah refers to the gifts that the foreign believers would bring. These would be brought to honor the glory of God which was revealed in the birth of the newborn Savior King!

St. Matthew uses this same passage of Isaiah as the basis for his story of the Magi. The Magi – from different nations and locales – saw something unusual in the nighttime sky. Perhaps a comet – perhaps a conjunction of stars or planets – perhaps a supernova or the birth of a star – is what they observed. Fortunately, they were well-read enough and wise enough to recognize this as a sign from God – and they believed! They saw truth in the words of scripture and in the nighttime heavens!

Sadly, King Herod was in denial. He was king and must remain so at all costs. Any usurpers must be destroyed. Herod could not see or accept the truth of God's plan – He could not accept the truth of the scriptures and the prophecies. And he did not discern or understand the spiritual kingdom and the freedom that the babe of Bethlehem would inaugurate and establish.

I have mentioned before that the evangelists – the Gospel writers – were anti-establishment. They saw the Jewish religious leaders as self-righteous and as deniers of the truth. Hence, they speak of outcasts – of the shepherds – as the first to discover the Messiah. Then they speak of foreigners – the Gentiles – the so-called non-believers – coming to him in the Magi – And only with the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, years later, is the Messiah revealed to the Chosen People themselves. And then, again, the religious leaders denied him and the truth of the words he spoke!

Brothers and Sisters, fortunately for us, God's truths are revealed for all people everywhere. The gifts of our forgiveness and our salvation can be refused only if we deny the truth about ourselves and our sinfulness. Hopefully, in the gifts of the Magi, we, truly, can see our personal materiality, our mortality and the spiritual realm to which we have all been called.

So, let us pray, today, that we all can become people of the truth from this moment forward!

Amen.

January 3, 2021

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