



FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY **YEAR B – JANUARY 7, 2018**

If you Google the “Solemnity of the Lord's Epiphany”, you will find these words among a host of others: “Many traditions and genuine manifestations of popular piety have been developed in relation to the Solemnity of the Lord's Epiphany, which is of ancient origin and rich in spiritual content. Among such forms of popular piety, mention may

be made of:

- the exchange of "Epiphany gifts", which derives from the gifts offered to Jesus by the three kings (cf. Mt 2,11) and more radically from the gift made to mankind by God in the birth of Emmanuel amongst us (cf. Is 7, 14; 9, 16; Mt 1, 23). It is important, however, to ensure that the exchange of gifts on the solemnity of the Epiphany retain a Christian character, indicating that its meaning is evangelical: hence the gifts offered should be a genuine expression of popular piety and free from extravagance, luxury, and waste, all of which are extraneous to the Christian origins of this practice;
- the blessing of homes, on whose lintels are inscribed the Cross of salvation, together with the indication of the year and the initials of the three wise men (C+M+B), which can also be interpreted to mean *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, written in blessed chalk; this custom, often accompanied by processions of children accompanied by their parents, expresses the blessing of Christ through the intercession of the three wise men and is an occasion for gathering offerings for charitable and missionary purposes;

The magi story today reminds us each year that Jesus came into our world not just for the chosen people of his time but for all people of all time, Jews and Gentiles alike. We are the Gentiles.

He came to dispel the darkness of sin and to challenge us to let our light shine for all to see -- so that non-believers may be guided by the shining light of our example and be led out of the darkness of their world into the light of the kingdom of God.

Today Jesus is not found in a crib in Bethlehem .He is found in the hearts and souls of his followers. They are the stars in the darkness of our world, pointing the way to Jesus.

Jesus says in Saint Matthew, chapter 5, "You are the light of the world" Notice, he doesn't say, "I'm counting on the Pope to dispel all the darkness on planet earth -- or I'm counting on the Mother Teresas of the world to help the poor and the hungry. He says, I'm counting on you."

Maybe your light and mine isn't as bright as some of the great saints of our time. It doesn't have to be. All the darkness in the world cannot snuff out the light of a single candle.

As I have said often before...there are two ways to bring light into darkness. One is to be the candle; the other is to be the mirror that reflects it.

Jesus is the candle - we are the mirrors that reflect him. More than 2000 years ago, God depended on John the Baptist to make him known, Now God depends on us.

How will you make him known?

