

Holy Half Hour for January 2017

EPIPHANY

Hymn: suitable hymn

Introduction:

We have begun the year 2017 with new resolutions and promises. We are still in the Christmas octave. At Christmas we celebrated the incarnation of Jesus, God who was divine taking on human form, human nature, took the form of small baby to show us the way.

Coming Sunday we celebrate the feast of Epiphany. The story of the Magi following the light of the Star that led them to Jesus – the Light of the World. Their diligence and thirst for God was amply rewarded.

Jesus – the Light of the World is in our midst. As the glory of the Lord, shines upon us, let us offer Him the best gift, the gift of ourselves.

Scripture Reading: Mathew 2: 1-12 to be proclaimed from the Bible **(silence 5 mins)**

Reflection: To be read slowly

In the reading the three wise men came bringing gifts of myrrh, frankincense, and gold to worship the child Jesus. Each of these gifts have a symbolic meaning.

Let's begin with **myrrh**

Among ancient peoples, myrrh was used to prepare the dead for burial. For example, the women brought myrrh to the tomb of Jesus. Because of myrrh's relationship with death, it made an ideal symbol of human vulnerability. The gift of myrrh, therefore, is symbolic of the **humanity** of Jesus. It speaks to us of Jesus' human vulnerability. Like us, Jesus experienced the whole range of human emotions: joy, sorrow, fear, frustration, loneliness. He was like us in everything but sin. **(pause for silence)**

This brings us to **frankincense**

Ancient people used incense in their religious worship. The aroma and smoke, spiraling upward to heaven, spoke to them about gods and divinity. The gift of incense, therefore, is symbolic of the **divinity** of Jesus. It tells us, in Paul's words to the Philippians: "Jesus always had the nature of God, but he became like man and appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death – his death on the cross. For this reason God raised him to the highest place above." **(pause for silence)**

Finally, there is **Gold**

Among ancient peoples, gold was regarded as the king of metals. It was therefore the ideal gift for a king, symbolic of the **kingship** of Jesus. A king was, above all, a leader. The ideal king led by love. He undertook noble causes for his people. He inspired

others to join him in his causes. Jesus was a king. He led by love. He undertook the noble cause of establishing God's kingdom on earth. And he inspired others to join him in his work. (silence for reflection) **(pause for silence)**

The feast of Epiphany reminds us that this revelation is not just for a select group but for all the world. We have been enlightened so that we can help bring the light of faith to others. But first we must recognize the gift that we have received. We need to keep on searching for Christ constantly, following the star throughout our lives. The Gospel picture of the Wise Men coming to the stable in Bethlehem reminds us that Christ is to be found in unexpected places. Who would think of looking for an Infant King, or a Messiah, in a cattle shed? So too, in the mystery of our everyday life at home, at work, at school, Christ is to be found in the experience of love and service, forgiveness and reconciliation. Mini Epiphanies or manifestations or revelations are constantly happening in our lives. When you watch a perfect sunset or receive forgiveness from a friend. Like the Wise Men, we too have to come to Christ in worship and praise. We too must open our hearts and offer to Christ the gifts of our love and service.

After each question kindly pause for silent reflection.

- What is the gift / talent put in me that I can reach out to others?
- Have I been offering my talents in love or self glorification?
- Many times I have been put down whilst utilizing my talents for the service of my church and community, despite all that can I persevere in my mission?
- If I have been selfish, let me be humble and offer my series and time for the good of others and glory of God? (silence for reflection)

Intercessions

Leader: The feast of Epiphany marks the manifestation of the Messiah. Guided by a star the Magi were led to child Jesus. Let us pray that we too may become sincere seekers of the truth that Jesus embodies.

Response: Lord, manifest yourself to us.

1. For the pope, the bishops and other leaders of the Church that they may dialogue and interact with leaders of other faiths in order to foster religious harmony and peace. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.
2. For the Church: that we may faithfully follow where God leads us and be attentive to the deepest desires which God has placed in our hearts. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.
3. For the grace to discernment: that we may recognize God in nature, in relationships, and in the events of our lives and deepen our relationship with God who makes all things work together for the good of God's people. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.

4. For all Christians: that we be sources of light through our deeds of charity, actions for justice and dedication to the truth so that others may be drawn to God. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.
5. For all who are searching for God or meaning in life: that the Good News may become real to them and be a light that leads them to wholeness. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.
6. Pray for you own personal and local needs. (Pause). We pray to the Lord.

Leader: God our Father, we thank you for the joy you bestow on us through the celebration of the Feast of Epiphany. Grant us the grace that we too may like the Wise Men seek and find Christ, your Son. Amen.

Benediction Hymn : Let us bow in adoration

Divine Praises

Concluding Hymn: We three kings

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