SOLEMNITY OF EPIPHANY

**READINGS:** Isaiah 60:1-6 / Ephesians 3:2-6/ Matthew 2:1-12
**THEME:** THE WISE STILL SEEK JESUS

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

Christmas, as we know, celebrates the fact that the Son of God became flesh and dwelt among us. Today’s solemn feast of Epiphany then celebrates how the God, who came to live among us, revealed or manifested Himself (cf. second reading). Particularly, today’s gospel reading narrates the story of how the Son of God was revealed to the gentile wise men, and therefore, to the rest of mankind as the new born King who had come to save the whole world.

In the gospel story, we have three groups of people: (a) King Herod and his associates, (b) the chief priests and the scribes and then (c) the wise men. The first group, Herod and his associates, simply did not like the idea of the birth of a new born king, and so they immediately planned to eliminate the child Jesus. Today, we still have ‘herodians’. These are people who discredit Jesus Christ or Christianity through books, movies or other forms of propaganda. Other modern day ‘herodians’ are those involved in occult practices or those who persecute Christians.

Then, we have the second group of chief priests and scribes. They knew the Scriptures and could indicate the exact place of birth of the Christ, whose coming they were expecting; but they showed no interest in looking for Him, when He was born. Today, many people are like the chief priests and scribes of old. In the first place, we have pastors who keenly study the Scriptures in order to preach powerful sermons, but their ultimate interest is not in Jesus or the salvation of souls, but in the money they can earn from their efforts. Secondly, we have professors or scholars of Scriptures, who after decades of studies now doubt that Jesus ever lived on this earth; or even if He ever lived, then Jesus was a mere powerful prophet, but not the Son of God. Thirdly, some of the chief priests and scribes of today are those Christians who after advancing in their professions or prospering in their businesses begin to show little or no interest in Jesus or Christian living. The fourth type of modern chief priests and scribes are those who are hearers but not doers of the Word of God; and many of us, if we are honest with ourselves, can identify with this final type of the second group.

Beloved, today’s message is intended to urge us to become part of the third group of wise men, women and children; or if we are already part of this group to encourage us to sustain our membership of it by God’s grace. Guided by a star, the wise men looked for the new born king, Jesus, in order to worship Him. They eventually saw the child Jesus with the mother, and they prostrated in worship. Can you imagine those elderly wise men prostrating before an infant (after all they were not Jews and they were not expecting the coming of any Messiah)? In addition, can you imagine that after the sacrifices of their long, tedious and risky journey, the wise men offered the child Jesus gifts of precious gold, frankincense and myrrh? These wise men represented true Christians of today. Modern wise men and women are guided not by a physical star in the sky, but by the invisible Holy Spirit from heaven, who attracts not so much the sight of human beings, but our hearts. He directs our hearts to journey in faith to worship Jesus Christ, not in a fixed place (Bethlehem), but ‘in spirit and in truth’ (Jn. 4:23). And we are to offer Jesus, not only our gold (treasure), but our precious hearts as well; not only frankincense, but also our lives of priestly holiness; and not myrrh (for Christ is already risen from the dead), but our lives as living sacrifices of praise (Rom. 12:1-2).

PRAYER: I pray that throughout 2014, we will not be counted among the ‘herodians’, chief priests and scribes, amen; that we would rather be counted among the wise who, filled with the star of heaven, the Holy Spirit, will ever more seek Jesus Christ, and worship Him in spirit and in truth! Amen!