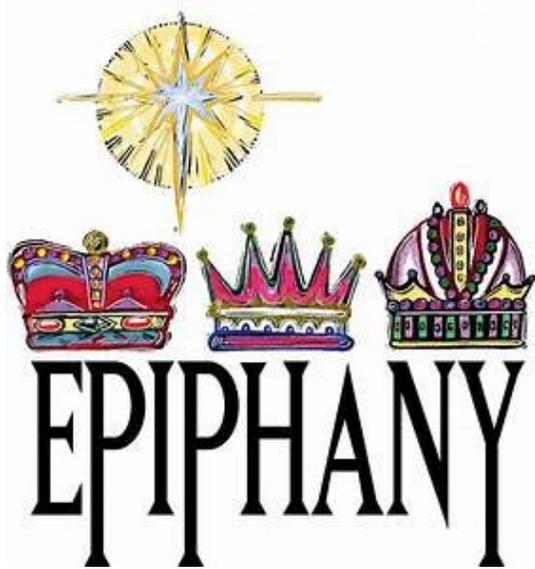


For The Bulletin Of
5 January 2020



From Father Robert

The story of the Epiphany, or the visitation of the magi, is told only in Matthew's gospel. But like many other elements of the Nativity story, we've likely combined this in our mind with Luke's story as well. So it's helpful to read this in the context of Matthew's gospel for he makes pertinent theological points. It's easy to read into the story, however, imagining that *three kings* bring the infant child presents. But, in reality, the number of magi is not given. We typically imagine three because of the number of gifts they brought. Also, the three are thought of as "kings," even though that word doesn't appear here either. Matthew calls them "magi," which were a class of Zoroastrian priests from Persia (modern-day Iran.). And though we likely imagine the infant child, Jesus, He is called a "child" here (akin to a toddler).

The gifts themselves represent royalty, and the magi represent Gentiles. This tells us

that even Gentiles come and worship Jesus, prefiguring the conclusion of the gospel, when the Risen Lord will give the commandment to go out to all the nations (Gentiles) teaching them and baptizing them. Finally, the fact that the magi find the child Jesus (rather than the infant) is significant too, as Herod will order the slaughter of the male children based on when the star initially appeared. So it's good for us to read the story carefully, gleaning the theological insights that Matthew means to impart.

This story gives us many points to consider. One might be the fact that Gentiles (considered "the other") come to worship Jesus. Herod needs to ask his advisors about the prophecy when those from Persia (Gentiles) are seeking out the child on their own. We, too, might be open to the other, those who come to the truth and to the person of Jesus on their own accord or by following their own stars. We know that by the conclusion of the gospel, this is Jesus' intention as well, that His teachings are not restricted to a few, but are open to all. This is the same gospel that will tell us that not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven. Instead, entry is only for those who do the will of the Father. And the will of the Father is that we act mercifully, much like the magi of the gospel today.

Let us then read this story carefully, with attention to detail. Matthew, the evangelist and theologian, has much to tell us about the great teacher and child-king, Jesus.



Living The Paschal Mystery

The magi in today's gospel represent all those who are not part of the "in" crowd. These foreigners who do not know Jesus come to worship Him before anyone else. They recognize in the signs of nature that something significant has happened, and they seek it out. Those who should know their own Scriptures missed something that Zoroastrian priests perceived.

We can ask ourselves, too, what we might miss when signs are right in front of our eyes. What is God doing in our midst? Is it something that others – foreigners, those not part of the "in" crowd – notice, but it escapes our attention? Let us die to our preconceived notions and surety in knowing the Lord, and be open to what God has in store for us. God is doing something new! There is an epiphany under way. May we have eyes to see and ears to hear!

For your reflection and prayer:

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah tells the people of God, "Nations shall walk by your light." How do you see God's church acting as a light in the world today?

As evident in the second reading from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the early church struggled to form a unified community made up of both Gentiles and Jews. Within our parish community, what groups struggle to live in communion with each other? How might God call us to work toward unity?

Within the gospel reading today, nature itself, in the form of a star, proclaims the birth of Jesus, the Son of God. From your own encounters with the natural world, what have you gleaned about the God of creation? The magi find the newborn king they seek, not in a palace but in a humble house in Bethlehem. Where do you find Christ's light and love in the ordinary?



About Liturgy: The Liturgy As An Epiphany

Epiphany is not merely a celebration of a past event. Yes, we recall the magi who followed the star and studied the sign of the times to find the Christ Child. We commemorate their homage of the newborn king by gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And we memorialize their courage to change their path and resist the injustice of world rulers.

However, if today's solemnity remains only an ancient story, we miss the greater epiphany that the Holy Spirit reveals to us every time we are gathered and sent from our Sunday Eucharist. Our liturgical journey from baptism until our final return home to God's kingdom is an epiphany. It is a lifelong opportunity for us to not only follow Christ's light but also make known to all generations what has been revealed in Christ – that the promise of salvation is given to all people. Entrusted with the light of Christ, we bring the gift of ourselves to the feet of Christ, and from that posture of praise and thanksgiving we are sent,

“changed,” to live a new way and called to glorify God by our lives.

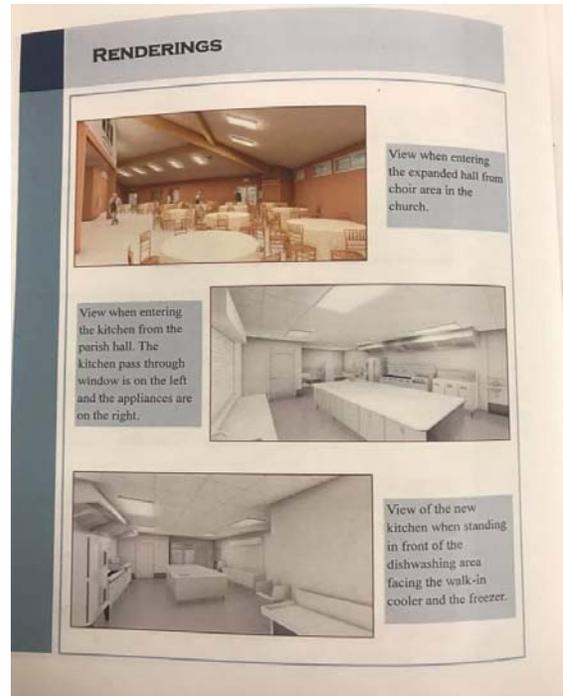


The Floral Arrangement at the Altar today is placed to the Glory of God and In Loving Memory of **June Rearick mother of Ray Daviess, and Anita Jawad, mother of Shellie Daviess.**

The Floral Arrangement at the Ambo is placed to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of **Dan O’Connor by his wife, Dorothy, and Joe and Theresa Nelms.**

Expansion Project

I am deeply grateful to all those who have participated in our Expansion Project Fund by either making an outright gift or a pledge to help us close the gap in funding for the expansion of the parish hall and the building of the proposed kitchen. In just four weeks, we have raised just under half of the amount we need to move the project forward. 113 families and/or individuals have contributed just under \$300,000. At the end of this month, the members of the Expansion Committee will join me for a meeting at the Diocese to seek permission to move forward with construction.



It is also important for you to understand that your pledge doesn’t need to be paid in full before this meeting. Your signed pledge is your word that you will follow through on your contribution in a time that is good for you – that can be in a year, two years, or three years, whatever works best for you.

It is important that I have as many signed pledges as possible to indicate to the Diocese that we have the support and the commitment of the parish to complete the project.

Please pray for the success of our campaign; pray for all those who have not yet participated that they will do so and that we will have the participation of every family. Remember, we are seeking **equal sacrifice but not equal gifts.** Again, thank you to all who have participated thus far. As Frances Rojek put in her letter of support: “We can do this!”



On Friday, January 17th, a wonderful opportunity will take place when **Sandy Heinish, RN**, returns to our parish to introduce us to a new ministry that is being established for Caregivers. Please be sure to see the announcements that will appear in our bulletin over the next two weeks to give you more information and to invite your participation. If you are involved in caring for someone, this is for YOU! The initial meeting will take place between 9:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. You may also wish to speak to Deacon Gary Hack or Lee Oliver who attended a planning meeting recently and who have more information to share with you.

ANNUAL REPORT

One of the privileges I have as Pastor is to present the Annual Pastoral and Financial Report. The Report is required by the Diocese and is to be given on the last weekend of January. That will happen here at St. Ignatius of Antioch the weekend of January 25th and 26th. At each liturgy that weekend, each parishioner will receive a printed copy of the report as well as the End of the Year Financial Report and the proposed Budget for 2020. I hope you will plan to be with us for this important moment in our parish's life and ministry.



On behalf of all of us, I wish to thank all those who help us in so many varied ways each week: those who arrive early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare both the parish hall and the church for the weekend: **Carole Miller, Jean Rogers, Adaugo Nnaji, Alfred Madoshi, Thelma & Reno Benasfre, Rose Salamanca, Mency Osborne, and Angela Bueno.** ...to those who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall throughout the week: **Steve Rojek, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, and Fr. Robert.** ...to **Dilcia Aparicio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens. ...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week: **Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan Young, Monika Kauer, Adora Pesapane, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.** ...to **our counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections. ...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week: **Frances Rojek, Mel Costanza, Maryann Peddicord, Estrella Rusk, Alicia Perez, Bev Iacona, and Paul Riofski.** ...to our St. Vincent de Paul volunteer who transported last week's donations: **Frank Zamora.** ...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Dave Costanza (Lead), Kathy Augusta and Vince Augusta.** ...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keeps watch over our vehicles during

the weekend Liturgies: **Don Benson, Steve Rojek and David Simpson.**

STANDING TOGETHER AGAINST HATE

December 30, 2019

Dear Friends,

On December 28, 2019, a day on which the Christian Community observes the "slaughtering of the Holy Innocents," a man with a history of mental illness viciously attacked people gathered inside the home of a Rabbi observing the Seventh Night of Hanukkah.

Rabbi Chaim Rottenberg and members of his Hasidic Community in Monsey, NY, fought back against the intruder who intended to attack the Synagogue next door. Several in the Community called the quick action a "Hanukkah miracle" since the attack could have been far worse than it was. Nonetheless, the attack was horrific. We need only remember the massacre that resulted in the murder of eleven people at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA, on October 27, 2018.

We, at The Interfaith Peace Project, hope this is the beginning of a "Hanukkah miracle" since we are deeply concerned for the safety and well-being of the Jewish Community. The rise of

attacks on the Jewish Community during the past year and over the Holiday Season is more than alarming. Elected Jewish Officials in New York are calling on the Governor to declare a state of emergency. Sadly, they wrote:

ated, it is no longer safe to be identifiably e of New York. We cannot shop, walk do id our children to school, or even worship

The psychological difficulties of the attacker do not mitigate the seriousness of this incident. The Jewish Community in Monsey, New York, has suffered threats for simply moving into the local community. The rise in anti-Semitism reflects the loss of memory concerning the Holocaust. We wonder how much time and effort is spent in religious education programs sensitizing students to the horrors of religiously motivated hate. We must confront the irresponsible rhetoric often found in the content of our Social Media. We must continue to challenge the fear and hatred we might harbor in our hearts against anyone. Finally, we must have the courage and willingness of heart to stand with one another in times of trouble.

The Interfaith Peace Project continues to call for a reconsideration of any prayer, belief, or ideology that considers people of faiths other than our own as inferior. The way we worship and gather as a people of faith must reflect our willingness to

honor the dignity of all people without prejudice to their faith and beliefs.

We learned in the aftermath of the Pittsburgh massacre, "We are Stronger than Hate!" Today and always, we stand together with the Jewish Community. We will continue to light the candles of hope and peace. We pledge to do everything in our power to ensure that our practice of spirituality honors the dignity and well-being of all. With the worldwide Jewish community, we exclaim, "Never again!"

Peacefully,

Thomas P. Bonacci, C.P.,

