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HOMILY GIVEN ON THE SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY

Br. Reginald Udouj, O.S.B.

Father Elijah told us in his homily on Christmas day how the liturgies on Christmas day evolved. How at the vigil, the Gospel that is used is the genealogy of Jesus, taken from the Gospel of Matthew. The mass at midnight uses the infancy narrative, the account of the birth of Christ taken from the Gospel of Luke. Then the mass on Christmas day is the prologue from the Gospel of John, an account of Christs' light overcoming the darkness. In using these differing Gospels, we can look at the incarnation from different angles. We get a slightly different viewpoint with each reading. The Church does the same thing with its liturgical calendar. Through the course of the year we will get a look at the life of Jesus from several different vantage points. John Henry Newman tells us that during the Christmas season we have been commemorating Christs Grace, during lent, we will commemorate his temptation, on Good Friday, his suffering and death, On Easter we commemorate his victory while on Holy Thursday, his return to the Father. Advent is celebrated in anticipation of Christs' second coming. We go through our year looking at the life of Christ and his many deeds, giving thanks. But today is not a Jesus day, today is a God day.

Today is the day in which we celebrate the kingship of Jesus. The rest of the year we celebrate Christ as Judge, as savior,

we celebrate Christ as Priest and Prophet. The rest of the year we celebrate the miracles of Christ, we celebrate the mercy of Christ. The epiphany season is the season before the 12 year old Jesus left the temple with a frantic Mary and Joseph, and went down with them and was obedient to them. The epiphany season is the season that angels announced his birth, that the shepherds worshipped him, and the star appeared, bringing the magi.

This is a story that we hear every year, we sing the carol, “we three kings of orient are...” Christ is born and they are there with gifts. It is a neat story, all wrapped up with a big ole bow. But they were not Kings, or holy men, they were men searching. They were men searching for God. Using whatever tools that they had. An obscure knowledge of Jewish salvation prophecy, like we hear in the reading from Isaiah today. Their knowledge of astrology, of algebra. They set out on a journey of hope.

Imagine this journey, from Persia, present day Iran, across the desert to a small meaningless town in Judea. Travelling at night, across an endless expanse of desert, to follow the star. I travelled across this same country this past summer in a bus and marvel at the courage and the hope that these wise men had. Some of these wadis, dried creek beds that they had to travel across had drop offs of over a thousand feet. It is a rocky, desolate, and dangerous country. They would have suffered the elements, had to deal with the indifference of those that they would have encountered along the way, as well as the drama and intrigue within the court of King Herod. Still they trusted in their skills and made their way to Bethlehem.

Karl Rahner, a twentieth century German theologian that we study in the seminary, speaks of a Horizon that we as humans are always moving towards, there is a knowledge within us of what

we are lacking and it is at that horizon, which is God, where we will find it. While we are continually searching, God is always calling to us, inviting us.

This is the story of the wise men, they did not go to Bethlehem looking for a child, they went to Bethlehem looking for God, because they were called by God. While today is a day to celebrate the kingship of Jesus, to celebrate Christ as God. Today is also a day to celebrate the wise men's journey. Today is the day to celebrate our journey. Today, we are the magi. We are searching for God, or we would not be here. We are all being called by God, or we would not be here. Our journeys are just as difficult as that journey taken so long ago. While we probably won't have to cross the desert, we all have many difficulties to deal with, we all have infirmities that take our minds away from God. We all have distractions, things that we think are more important.

But we are all following a star. A star that has led us here today. To Christ our King, who we have just heard proclaimed. Who is here with us in our assembly. And who we will share in the Eucharist. As we continue our celebration today, and as we go out and continue our lives, we must always remember our King. As well as remembering our Journey. Using the skills and talents that God has given us to bring us ever closer.