



THEY OPENED THE TREASURES AND PRESENTED HIM WITH GIFTS

Matthew 2:11



Reflection January 2022

I know a medical doctor in my native town, whose empathetic listening skills, accurate diagnosis, and prescription of affordable medicines made him loved and sought after by patients from all walks of life. Once, in an interview by one of the local TV channels he was asked: "Why are you so passionate about your profession? What makes you focus so much on your patients than on becoming rich?" He replied with a smile: "My profession is the continuation of the healing ministry of Jesus; through my profession, I profess my faith. I am a missionary of Jesus".

As we begin this new year, I want to place the testimony of this doctor as a door to enter into the mystery of the feast of the Epiphany wherein we meditate on the Magi's visit to Baby Jesus. The gospel of Mathew gives a detailed description of this visit in Mt. 2:1-12. From the early centuries, the names of the three kings were found in church chronicles as Balthazar from Ethiopia, Melchior from Persia, and Gasper from India. Having come from three different parts of the world, they signify the universality of Jesus' mission of redemption. God reveals Jesus as the Saviour of the whole world.

The spread of the Jesus Youth Movement in the Church is surely a work of God that fills my heart with wonder. But it must also remind all of us of the universal role and relevance of the movement in the mission of the Church. Just as the star communicated to people from different cultures and brought them to the Saviour, we too will become relevant if we learn to communicate to those around us and to accompany them to the manger wherever they are from, transcending all language, cultural and age barriers. We know that only this divine encounter can satisfy them and make them travel along a new way - the Gospel way. Perhaps later they will remember us and wonder, "We had seen his star!" (Mt. 2:2)

'Going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him. They opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh' (Mt. 2:11). According to St. John Chrysostom, a Father of the Church, the Magi kneeling down are a sign of the adoration of Jesus as God. Bible commentators say that the gifts of the Magi symbolically represent the triple ministry of Jesus. Gold points to his shepherding ministry, frankincense to his teaching ministry, and myrrh to his priestly ministry. Their offering of the three gifts acknowledges Jesus' triple ministry of sanctifying, teaching, and shepherding.

Jesus Youth is defined as 'a missionary movement at the service of the Church'. Like St. Francis of Assisi, our heavenly patron, we are called to 'build the church' the mystical body of Christ. Our calling is, like that of the doctor mentioned above, to be a modern-day Magi. Each one of us has been uniquely blessed by the Lord. Our health and wealth, time and talents, position, and possibilities are treasures gifted by God to invest in the vineyard of the Lord. Let us open our treasure boxes to generously share our gifts with Jesus and His church. Hans Balthasar, in one of his spiritual reflections says, "What we are is God's gift to us, what we become is our gift to God." Some of us may be like the servants in the vineyard, wasting our time and talents and doing nothing. "Why do you stand here idle all day?" (Mt. 20:6).

The new year beckons us to come to him with a repentant yet trusting heart and to offer him daily in prayer "our gifts of gold, which is Christ's wisdom to shine in our lives, frankincense, the prayer and adoration that we give him, and myrrh, our daily self-sacrifices to the Lord" (St. Gregory). From this life of prayer emerges a life of passionate mission. Like Mary our mother, let us "travel in haste through hilly regions" to repair and build the church. Let us make this new year count by being passionate in prayer and zealous in service.

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